# シムリム

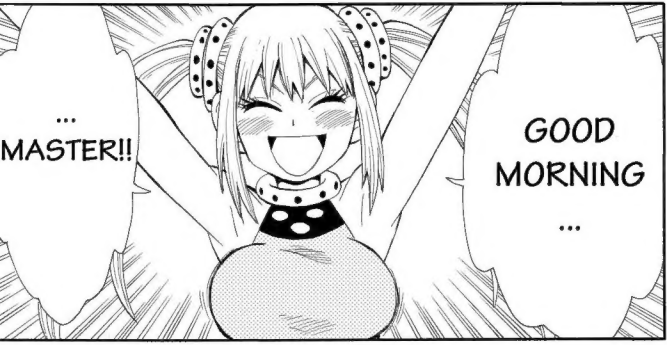
04

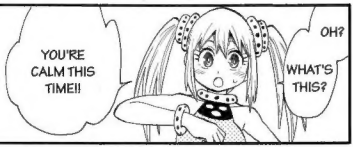
story & art by
SATOSHI MIZUKAMI

CIRCLE 20

CITY • 1

...
...
CLATTER
カラン
ドサッ
WUMPH
CLATTER
カラン


GOOD MORNING
...
...
MASTER!!


OH?
WHAT'S THIS?
YOU'RE CALM THIS TIME!!

AND YOU SEEM KIND OF MATURE AND REFINED, MASTER!!
SO COOL!

HEY.
MORN-ING.

IT WAS EXCESSIVELY DRAMATIC...
THIS PAST LIFE WAS ALMOST LIKE A MANGA... OR MAYBE A FILM.
... REFINED?
MAYBE IT'S HOUTAROU'S INFLUENCE...
THEY WERE BOTH YOUNG, BUT HIS DEATH WASN'T LIKE FONE'S.
HOUTAROU DIED YOUNG, BUT HE HAD SOME AMAZING EXPERIENCES...
!!
WHOA.
FWOOM
IN FACT, IT FEELS LIKE THINGS HAVE BEEN SETTLED BETWEEN ME AND ISHIGAMI-SAN...
OR SOME-THING...
IT FELT LIKE HE DIDN'T REALLY HAVE REGRETS.

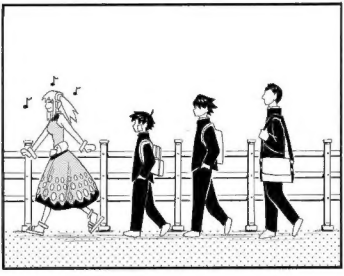
5
Ⅳ
3
二
ARE THERE STILL THREE MORE PAST LIVES?
FOOM
FOOM
FOOM
FOOM
FOOM
NOW THE SPIRIT CIRCLE HAS FOUR FLAMES.
YOU SHOULD SMILE.
MASTER, YOU'RE MAKING A SCARY FACE.
SQUISH
Ⅱ.
EVEN SKIPPING FORTUNA, THERE ARE STILL TWO MORE...
TWO? DIDN'T MY CONNECTION WITH ISHIGAMI-SAN END WITH HOUTAROU'S LIFE?

WHAT KIND OF COMPARISON IS THAT?
WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE YOU THREW OUT ALL YOUR PORN?
YOU SEEM DIFFERENT AGAIN.

GOOD MORNING.
HEY.

HEY.
GOOD MORNING, FUUTA.

THERE IS NO GREATER LUXURY.
I GET TO SEE MY FRIENDS EVERY MORNING.



LODE... A PLACE WHERE ADULT MAGAZINES HAVE BEEN ABANDONED. EQUIVALENT TO A GOLD MINE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.
I FOUND A LODE AT THE GHOST APARTMENT. I'LL TELL YOU WHERE IT IS LATER.

SPEAKING OF PORN...
OH, RIGHT.

I WONDER IF THE HIGH SCHOOLERS IN THE APARTMENT THREW THEM OUT.
OH!
LIKE TAKEDA'S BRO?
GOOD GRIEF. THEY'RE SUCH CHILDREN.
RIGHT NOW I DON'T CARE ABOUT PORN...
HEH!
BY THE WAY, I HAVEN'T HEARD RUMORS ABOUT THE APARTMENT'S GHOST RECENTLY.
MAYBE IT WAS EXORCISED.
...WHAT?!
FUUTA?
YOU SCARED ME.
WH-WHAT?
UM...
NOTHING...
I'VE GOT TO GO!!
WHERE?! WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?
?!
THE GHOST APART-MENT!! I'M SKIPPING SCHOOL!!
DASH
Y-YOU'RE GOING TO PICK IT UP NOW...?!
MASTER, WAIT.
FUUTA...
HUFF...
HUFF...

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

YOU DIDN'T ASK SPECIFICALLY WHERE YOU COULD FIND THE LODE OF PORN.
THAT'S NOT IT!

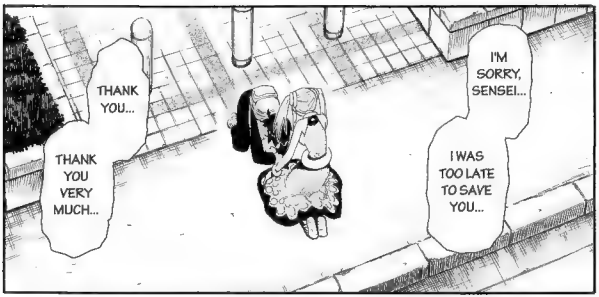
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?!
WE MET THE "SPIRIT OF THE FALLEN WARRIOR" HERE!!
UM... IN LATE SEPTEMBER!!

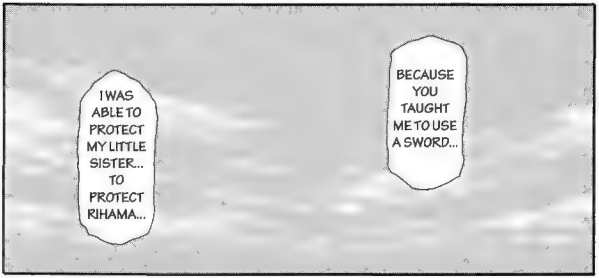
MASTER...
WAIT FOR ME!!

AND HE STOLE THAT SWORD AND SPEAR FROM HIS ENEMIES
...
HE WAS STUCK FULL OF ARROWS!
THE FALLEN WARRIOR?
THAT PERSON STUCK WITH THOSE THINGS?
THE ONE SWINGING A SWORD AND STAFF
...
OBAYASHI-SENSEI!!!
THAT SPIRIT ...
THAT PERSON IS...
WHAT HAPPENED TO OBAYASHI-SENSEI?!
RUNE...
YOU KNEW HIM?
I...HIT HIM WITH THE SPIRIT CIRCLE, BUT...
THIS WEAPON KILLS SOULS, DOESN'T IT?!
DID I...

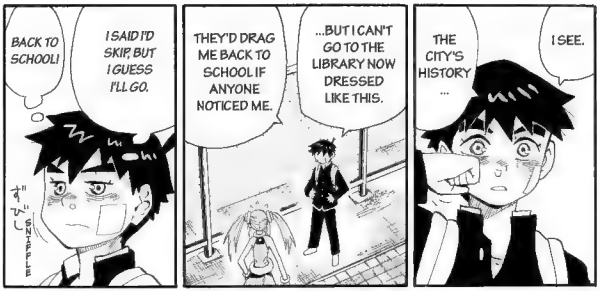
THAT'S ...
THAT'S GOOD...
IN ANY CASE, HIS SOUL WASN'T KILLED OR DESTROYED.
HE RETURNED TO THE PLACE WHERE SPIRITS BELONG.
HE TURNED TO LIGHT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MASTER.
...TO LIGHT?
TURNED ...
DID... DID HE PASS AWAY?
UM... HE RETURNED TO THE LIGHT.
PASS AWAY?

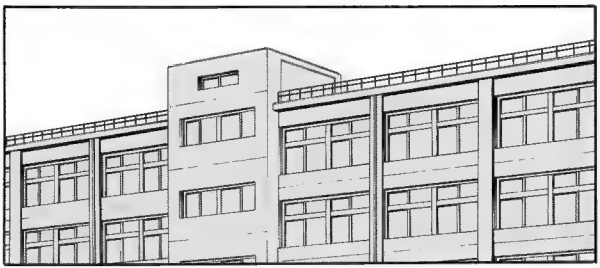
FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, HE KEPT...
HE KEPT PROTECTING THIS ROAD...
HE... OBAYASHI-SENSEI BECAME A SPIRIT...


THANK YOU...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
I'M SORRY, SENSEI...
I WAS TOO LATE TO SAVE YOU...


I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT MY LITTLE SISTER... TO PROTECT RIHAMA...
BECAUSE YOU TAUGHT ME TO USE A SWORD...

だーっ
DASH
MASTER?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING THIS TIME?
がばっ
WUFF
WHOA
...
IWANA AND I FELL IN THIS RIVER...
THE RIVER BY THE APARTMENT ...!!
ガシャーン
CHANK
HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO...!!
I WAS HERE!!
PEOPLE DO CRAZY THINGS...
THEY CARVED OUT A MOUNTAIN TO BUILD AN APARTMENT HERE.


BACK TO SCHOOL!
I SAID I'D SKIP, BUT I GUESS I'LL GO.
SNIFFLE
THEY'D DRAG ME BACK TO SCHOOL IF ANYONE NOTICED ME.
...BUT I CAN'T GO TO THE LIBRARY NOW DRESSED LIKE THIS.
THE CITY'S HISTORY ...
I SEE.



AHHH!
IS THAT WHAT YOU TOLD THEM?
YOU'RE THE WORST.
DID YOU FIND THE PLACE? THEY WERE PRETTY HARD TO FIND.
WHAT KIND OF BOOKS DID YOU FIND THERE?
DID YOU FIND THEM?
FUUTA, IS IT TRUE YOU WENT TO PICK UP DIRTY BOOKS?

SIGN. REFERENCE ROOM

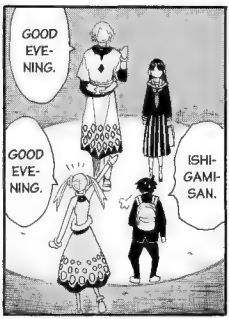
HMMM... ISHIGAMI-SAN,
SOMEWHERE OVER THERE...
AW, YOU KNOW, THERE'S JUST SOMETHING I'M CURIOUS ABOUT.
YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS CITY?

BOOK· CITY HISTORY 1

...HUH? I THOUGHT YOU JOINED THE HISTORY CLUB TO RESEARCH LOCATIONS FROM OUR PAST LIVES.
...
PAST LIVES? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT?
LOOKED WHAT UP?
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
WHO KNOWS?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
OH.
YOU'RE INTERFERING WITH OUR CLUB'S ACTIVITIES. COULD YOU LEAVE ALREADY?
BESIDES, SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT THE ART CLUB?
FUUTA!! IF YOU WANT TO DRAW, I'LL...
I'LL BE YOUR N-N-NUDE MOH... MODEL...
WHAT?! ARE YOU STILL THINKING ABOUT OUR CONVERSATION THIS MORNING?
HMMM.
IT'S HUGE...
BORROWED IT
SIGH.
WHAT AN EXHAUST-ING DAY...

WHAT?!

I HATE NIGHTTIME BECAUSE IT'S EASIER TO RUN INTO GHOSTS.
IT'S DARK BY THE TIME I LEAVE MY CLUB.


GOOD EVE-NING.
GOOD EVE-NING.
ISHI-GAMI-SAN.

STEP
HEY.
YOU.

WHAT DOES THE CITY'S HISTORY HAVE TO DO WITH OUR PAST LIVES?
I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING.
I THOUGHT YOUR HOUSE IS THE OTHER WAY.

...?!
IN THIS CITY...?!
...
WHAT?
HOUTAROU DIED AROUND HERE.
WHAT?
YOU DON'T KNOW?
I DIED IN THE SAME PLACE.
TRYING TO HIKE ALL NIGHT THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS IN THAT CONDITION WAS TOO MUCH.
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT? AFTER I DIED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STORY...
OH.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WE HAVEN'T DISCUSSED THIS LATEST PAST LIFE YET.
THAT THIS IS WHERE THAT PAST LIFE OCCURRED.
ANYWAY, HOW DID YOU KNOW?
I SEE.
...
IT WAS OBAYASHI-SENSEI, HOUTAROU'S SWORD MASTER.
D-DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF THE GHOST APARTMENT?
...

SATUR-
DAY.
SHOW
ME.
OH,
SORRY.
IF I TELL
YOU NOW,
IT'LL TAKE A
WHILE. LET'S
SAVE IT FOR
TOMORROW.
LATER...
KOKO-CHAN,
EAST-SAN,
SEE YOU
LATER!!
FARE-
WELL.
HUH?
I HAD A
STRANGE
DREAM ON
FRIDAY
NIGHT.

...WHAT SHOULD WE DO NEXT?
IS THIS ENOUGH?

...I'LL STAY HERE A LITTLE LONGER.

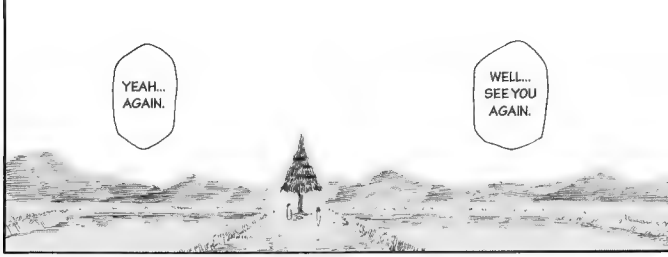
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I'M LEAVING.

I'M... SATISFIED.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S ENOUGH.

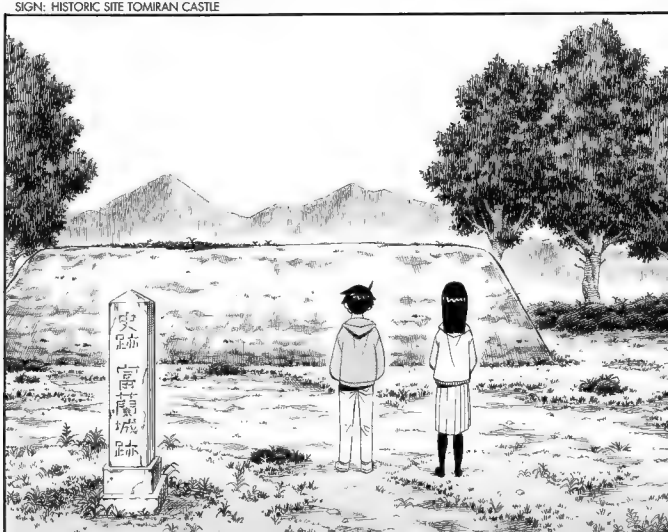
THAT YOU MENTION IT...
YEAH ...

THERE'S SOME-THING I STILL HAVE TO DO.
OH...

I SEE.
GOOD BYE.



SIGN: HISTORIC SITE TOMIRAN CASTLE



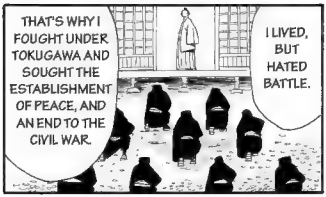
I WONDER WHICH PART THIS WAS?
YEAH.
THEY SAID IT BURNED DOWN.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
THE REMAINS OF THE CASTLE.
SIGN: HISTORIC SITE
史跡富
HE WAS MY BROTHER WHEN I WAS VANN, TOO.
...YOU KNOW KAJIROU?
...
I DON'T REMEMBER.
DID HIS NAME HAVE A SIMILAR MEANING WHEN YOU WERE VANN?
HE SAID HE HATED THE CHARACTER "NEXT" IN HIS NAME.
HAVE YOU MET HIM?
YES.
THAT IDIOT, HUH?

THE TEMPLE IS A RICE FIELD NOW.
YOU'D HAVE TO TAKE A BUS TO GET THERE, THOUGH...
THERE'S A BUILDING WHERE THE TREE WAS.
...DO YOU KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE TREE WHERE WE DIED OR THE TEMPLE THAT HELPED US?

...I SEE.
IT FEELS LIKE IT WAS LEFT BEHIND AS PROOF.
...IT'S IN THE NEXT TOWN OVER, THOUGH.
THIS PLACE.
IN ANY CASE, THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE MARKED AS A HISTORIC SITE.

IT DOESN'T MATTER ...
I DIED IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT STORY.
IS THAT THE DYING VERSION OF FALLING ASLEEP DURING SOME-THING?
TO FALL ASLEEP DURING... TO FALL ASLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ACTIVITY OR WORK
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU GOT TO COME OKEYA- HERE, KUN.
I WAS FROM MUCH FARTHER AWAY.

I WAS THE PRINCESS OF A SMALL COUNTRY DESTROYED BY WAR.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED,
BUT THE LEADER OF THE NINJAS TOOK PITY ON ME. HE TOOK ME IN AND RAISED ME.


I LIVED, BUT HATED BATTLE.
THAT'S WHY I FOUGHT UNDER TOKUGAWA AND SOUGHT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE, AND AN END TO THE CIVIL WAR.

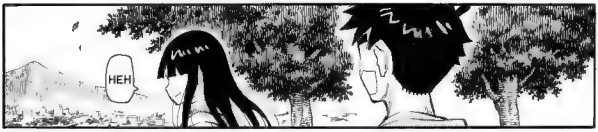
I BECAME A NINJA.

JUST LIKE YOU SAID...
I WAS SIMPLY A MURDERER.

ISHIGAMI-SAN.

OR SO I SAID, BUT I WAS JUST MAKING EXCUSES TO FIGHT.
...IT WAS STUPID.

DIDN'T IT END THERE?!
THE CHAINS OF HATE... OUR CONNECTION ...
THE BOTH OF US.
BACK THEN...
WE WERE SATISFIED.


HEH.

AFTER ALL, I'M KOKO...
...AND YOU'RE FORTUNA.

OF COURSE IT'S NOT OVER.

CIRCLE 21
CITY 2

ISHI-GAMI-SAN.
BACK THEN, WE WERE SATISFIED.
THE BOTH OF US.
THE CHAINS OF HATE...
OUR CONNECTION...
DIDN'T IT END THERE?!
...HEH.
...OF COURSE IT'S NOT OVER.

AFTER ALL, I'M KOKO...
...AND YOU'RE FORTUNA.

...REBORN THEN!!
WE WERE...
...REALLY SO IMPORTANT?
MORE THAN YOUR CURRENT LIFE?
IS THAT...
ABOUT KOKO.
ABOUT FORTUNA.
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT?
IWANA DIDN'T KNOW.
...AND LIE DOWN AND DIE?
OR WOULD YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH KOKO...
WOULD YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH FORTUNA?
I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU IF YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT *THAT*.
...ISHIGAMI-SAN.
YOU'RE ALWAYS *GOING ON* ABOUT THAT...

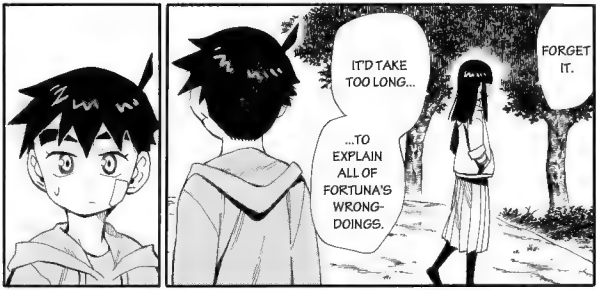
THAT'S ENOUGH ALREADY!!

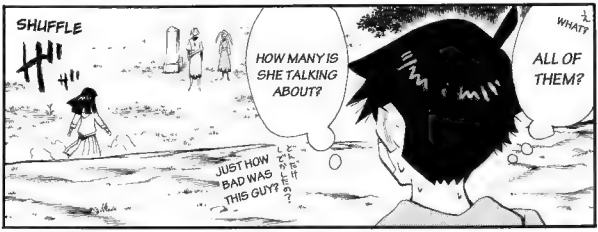
WHAT DID FORTUNA DO?!
JUST TELL ME ALREADY!!

ARGH...
ぐしゃ RUFFLE
ぐしゃ RUFFLE
WHY ARE YOU SO...

KOUKO!!
...
FORTUNA MADE...

HE SAID... HE'D SEE HIS PAST LIVES FOR HIMSELF.
HE'LL LEARN ON HIS OWN... EVENTUALLY.
...DON'T.
FUUTA-KUN... YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO IMPATIENT AND ASK FOR ANSWERS.
THE ONLY ANSWER YOU'LL RECEIVE IS KOUKO'S...
EAST...
YOU'RE RIGHT.
...


FORGET IT.
IT'D TAKE TOO LONG...
...TO EXPLAIN ALL OF FORTUNA'S WRONG-DOINGS.


SHUFFLE
HOW MANY IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT?
ALL OF THEM?
JUST HOW BAD WAS THIS GUY?

SHUFFLE
BUT THE TEMPLE AND TREE AREN'T THERE ANYMORE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO SHOW ME AROUND TOWN.
I DON'T MIND. I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY WERE.
HUH?
...WHY ARE YOU JUST STANDING THERE?
LET'S GO.

I-IT'S NOT A DATE!!
KOKO-CHAN, YOU'RE BLUSH-ING.
LET'S GO ON WITH THE DATE.
HOORAY!
GLAP
D-DATE?
RUNE!
HURRY, HURRY.
MAS-TER!
HA HA HA.
...TO HATE THIS GIRL...?
...BRING MYSELF...
WHY CAN'T I...
SHE HATES ME SO MUCH.
NOW THAT I'M THINKING ABOUT IT, I FEEL SO NERVOUS.
DAMN.

RIGHT?
THEY'RE UNBELIEV-ABLE...
HUMPH...

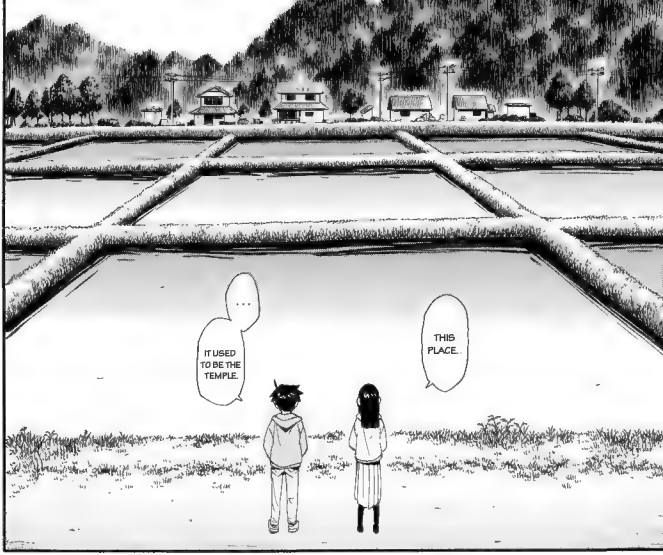
DO WHAT?!
YOU CAN DO IT, MASTER!!
FUUTA-KUN... YOU CAN DO IT!

I ONLY JUST NOTICED, BUT...

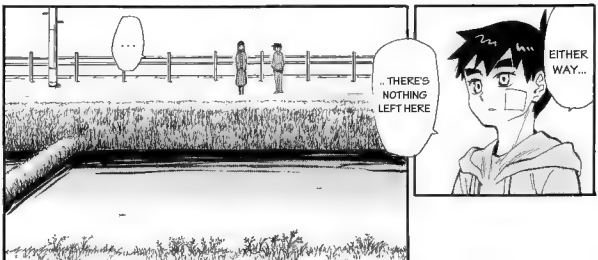
HUH?
...
...IN ANY CASE, LET'S GO.
I DON'T WANT TO STAY TOO LONG.

...THERE SEEM TO BE A LOT OF STRAGGLERS.

SURELY KAJIROU'S NOT ONE OF THEM...
SO HOT...
SO HOT...
AHHH...
URGH...
あ...
あ...
DON'T MEET THEIR GAZE.
DON'T REACT TO THEM EITHER.
...!!
GOOD...
...WAIT, ISN'T THAT MY MOM?!
AND MATSU-SAN...
...YOU MAY HAVE A CERTAIN PHYSICAL PREDIS-POSITION.
MAYBE THE CHAKRAS AROUND YOUR EYES ARE EASIER TO OPEN
I ONLY SAW A SPIRIT FOR A MOMENT AFTER HOTAROU, TOO.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING WEIRD AFTER FONE.
WHAT IS THIS, AN ANIME?
...THAT LETS YOU SHOOT BALLS OF ENERGY?
ISN'T CHAKRA THAT THING...
I FEEL LIKE I SAW SOME-THING...
...DID YOU SEE ANY SPIRITS?
WHEN THAT LANDSLIDE HAPPENED DURING HOTAROU AND IWANA'S FIGHT...
SPEAK-ING OF SEEING...


...
IT USED TO BE THE TEMPLE.
THIS PLACE.

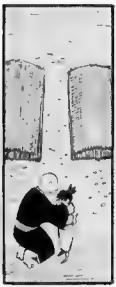
I DON'T KNOW...
DO TEMPLES MOVE?
MAYBE IT MOVED SOME-WHERE...?

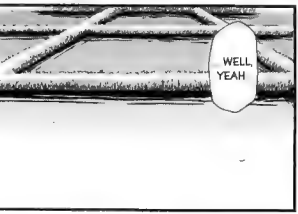

...
.. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT HERE
EITHER WAY...

I DID AN AWFUL THING TO THEM
I LEFT WITH-OUT A WORD...
...AND DIED...

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO AKARI AND THE HEAD PRIEST...

I'M SORRY.
AKARI MUST HAVE CRIED...




WELL, YEAH.

EVEN IF THEY DID, IN THESE CONDI-TIONS...
MAYBE WE HAVE GRAVES AROUND HERE.
THEY COULD HAVE BROUGHT US HERE AFTER WE DIED.

THE PLACE WHERE WE DIED.
SHALL WE GO TO THE NEXT PLACE?

...IN CASE WE WERE SEPARATED.
WE ESTABLISHED A MEETING PLACE...

YEAH...
...I SEE. IT'S PERFECT FOR A MEETING PLACE.

SERI-OUSLY...
SLUUURP SLUUURP
THERE'S NOTHING SENTI-MENTAL ABOUT IT.

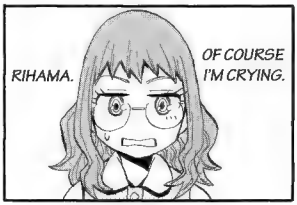
I WONDER IF THEY FOUND HAPPINESS...?
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AFTER THAT.
JINKUROU AND RIHAMA...
THEIR NAMES ARE DIFFERENT, BUT THEY COULD BE RELATED.
...MASHIRO-KUN AND UMI ARE THEIR DESCENDANTS.
MAY-BE...
HEH.
MASHIRO TETSUMA > TETSU
REALLY NICE.
IT'D BE...
...
HA HA.
THAT'D BE NICE.
UH, OH.
OKEYA-KU...
DON'T CRY HERE...
HEY.
YOU...

I'M GONNA TELL ON YOU.
YOU MADE HIM CRY.

T-TETSU, UMI.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
WAIT.
SNAP
I'M PHOTO-GRAPHING YOUR DATE.

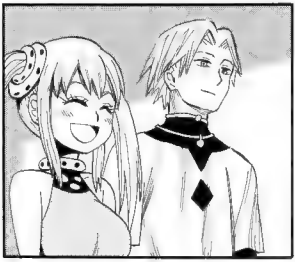
TO THE DOJO
WHAT? YOU GO, TOO, UMI?
THE DOJO'S RIGHT IN THE AREA
ME, TOO.
SOME-TIMES.
I GET HUNGRY
THIS PLACE
I COME HERE OFTEN ON MY WAY BACK FROM THE DOJO.
ARE YOU TWO ON A DATE?
WE'RE NOT.. !!
UM... NO.
ARE WE WHAT?
OH
NOTH-ING.
ANYWAY, ARE YOU TWO...
WE'RE LIKE SIBLINGS.
DON'T BE STUPID
...IT SEEMS LIKE YOU TWO ARE ON A DATE, TOO.
ARE YOU?
ACT-UALLY...
AND MY GRANDPA'S DOJO
CAN'T SECOND COUSINS GET MARRIED, THOUGH?
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WOULD
WE'RE RELATED.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT
MY GRAND-MA'S SIDE, YOU KNOW.
SEC-OND COU-SINS?
WHAT IS IT?

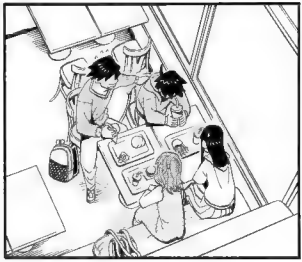
TH-THEY'RE RELATED...
ISHI-GAMI-SAN...
WE DIDN'T TELL YOU?
HUH?
CRINKLE
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
...I DIDN'T KNOW.
CALM DOWN...
I JUST THOUGHT IT'D BE FUNNY IF...
...IT WAS JUST HYPO-THETICAL.
WELL..



SIGN: HAMBURGER

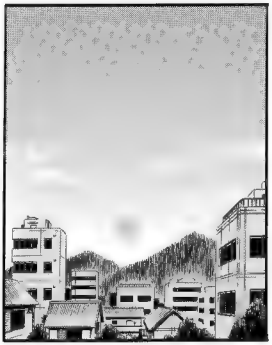
I'M GLAD THAT WE MET AGAIN HERE.





IT WASN'T A DATE.
WE WEREN'T ON A DATE.

SEE YA!
OKAY, OKAY.



...
WE WEREN'T!!
RIGHT?
WHO CARES WHAT THEY THINK?

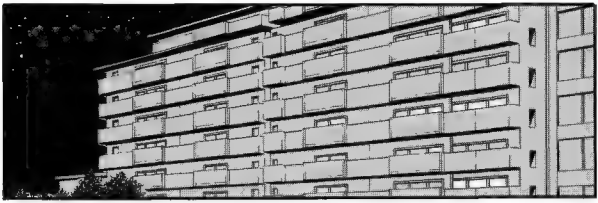
WHISPER WHISPER

THANKS.
...FOR TODAY.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET HOME?
...SHEESH. I'M LEAVING.
I'LL BE FINE FROM HERE.

BYE...
...

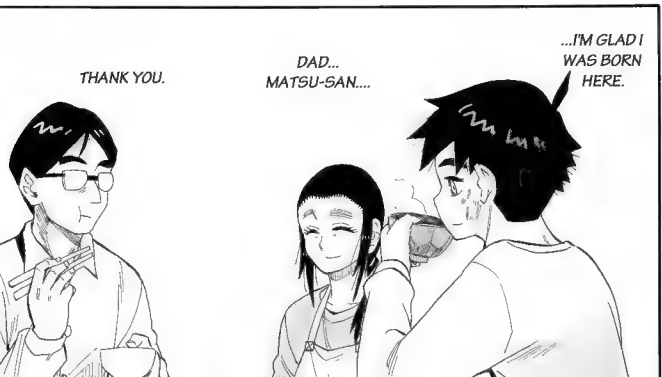
NO...
...THANK YOU.
BYE.



IT WAS NO BIG DEAL.
THAT DISTANCE I DESPERATELY COVERED ON FOOT IS A HALF-DAY ROUND TRIP BY TRAIN AND BUS, HUH...
HUMANS ARE AMAZING.

IN THE NEXT TOWN OVER?
YOU TOOK THE TRAIN AND BUS, HUH? MUST'VE BEEN A LONG TRIP.
WHERE WERE YOU TODAY?
THE CASTLE RUINS.

...SO, FIND ANYTHING AT THE RUINS?
MAYBE A SPIRIT?
OR A GHOST?
A PHAN-TOM?
HOW MATURE OF YOU TO TAKE THE TRAIN ALONE.
WHY DID YOU GO, ANYWAY?
I DIDN'T GO ALONE... AND THERE WERE GHOSTS...
TO STUDY THE PLACE..
WELL...
ACTUALLY...


THANK YOU.
DAD... MATSU-SAN....
...I'M GLAD I WAS BORN HERE.

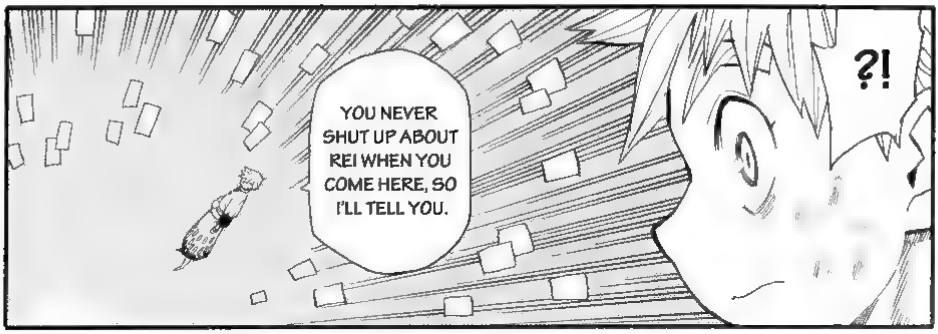
LET'S GO.
WHOOSH
OKAY.
MAS-TER?
YOU JUST DID THAT THE OTHER DAY.
SHOULDN'T YOU TAKE SOME MORE TIME BEFORE...
I'M FINE.
I WASN'T THAT STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY HOTAROU.
I'M CALM, SEE?
ARE YOU?
I'LL SEE YOU OFF, THEN.

BAM
I'M NOT IN A HURRY.
IT'S JUST THAT EVEN THOUGH I KEEP MEETING THE ONES I WANT TO SEE...
I'M NOT FLUSTERED.
...I'VE NEVER MET YOU AGAIN...
REI...
REI...!!

YOU WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT REI WHEN YOU COME HERE, SO I'LL TELL YOU.
?!
FOR...
YOU CAN'T SEE THAT SPIRIT AGAIN.

CIRCLE 22
LAFALLE 1

I MISS REI...
2
三
N
REI...
REI...
REI...
REI...!!


?!
YOU NEVER SHUT UP ABOUT REI WHEN YOU COME HERE, SO I'LL TELL YOU.

YOU CAN'T SEE THAT SPIRIT AGAIN.

FOR...
MAS...

TU...
MAS--
FOR
...

NAAA!!

YAAAH!!
!!
GRAB
GOTCHA!!
?!
IMPRES-
SIVE
TO THINK YOU'D MANAGE TO CATCH ME HERE.
AS AN OLD SOUL, IT'S NO WONDER YOU'RE DIFFERENT.
WHAT?!

NORMALLY, BY CALLING UP MEMORIES OF A PAST LIFE FROM BELOW THE DIMENSIONAL BOUNDARY OF HIMSELF TO THE SURFACE OF HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, AN OLD SOUL CAN DEEPLY INTEGRATE--
YOU HAVE MULTIPLE LIFETIMES INSIDE YOU.
IT MEANS YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED MANY PAST LIVES ON A DEEP LEVEL.
SHUT UP!!
IMPOS-SIBLE
YEAH, I'M IMPOSSIBLY STUPID!!
MY CLASS RANK IS 220 OUT OF 260!!
DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'RE SO SMART WHEN YOU'RE JUST ME!!
DAIKI 3
TETSU
230

LISTEN UP!
A GIRL IN MY CLASS HATES ME RIGHT NOW BECAUSE OF YOU!
EXPLAIN YOURSELF!!
AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I CAN'T SEE REI?!
EXPLAIN IT SO THAT AN IDIOT LIKE ME CAN UNDERSTAND!!
FOOLS DEMAND EXPLANATIONS FROM WISE MEN AS THOUGH IT IS NATURAL, BUT IT'S A DIFFERENT SKILL SET.
JUST EXPLAIN IT NORMALLY THEN.
HOWEVER'S EASIEST FOR YOU!
THE ANSWER TO YOUR FIRST QUESTION IS "LOOK."
THERE ARE HINTS IN YOUR NEXT LIFE.
IT'S NOT QUITE A REHASH... BUT IT'S "CLOSE."
WHETHER IT'S GOOD OR EVIL... YOU CAN INTERPRET IT AS YOU SEE FIT.
WHAT DOES THAT--?
YOUR SECOND QUESTION.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT SOUL HAS ENDED.
WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THE SOUL YOU CALL REI AGAIN?
RIGHT?

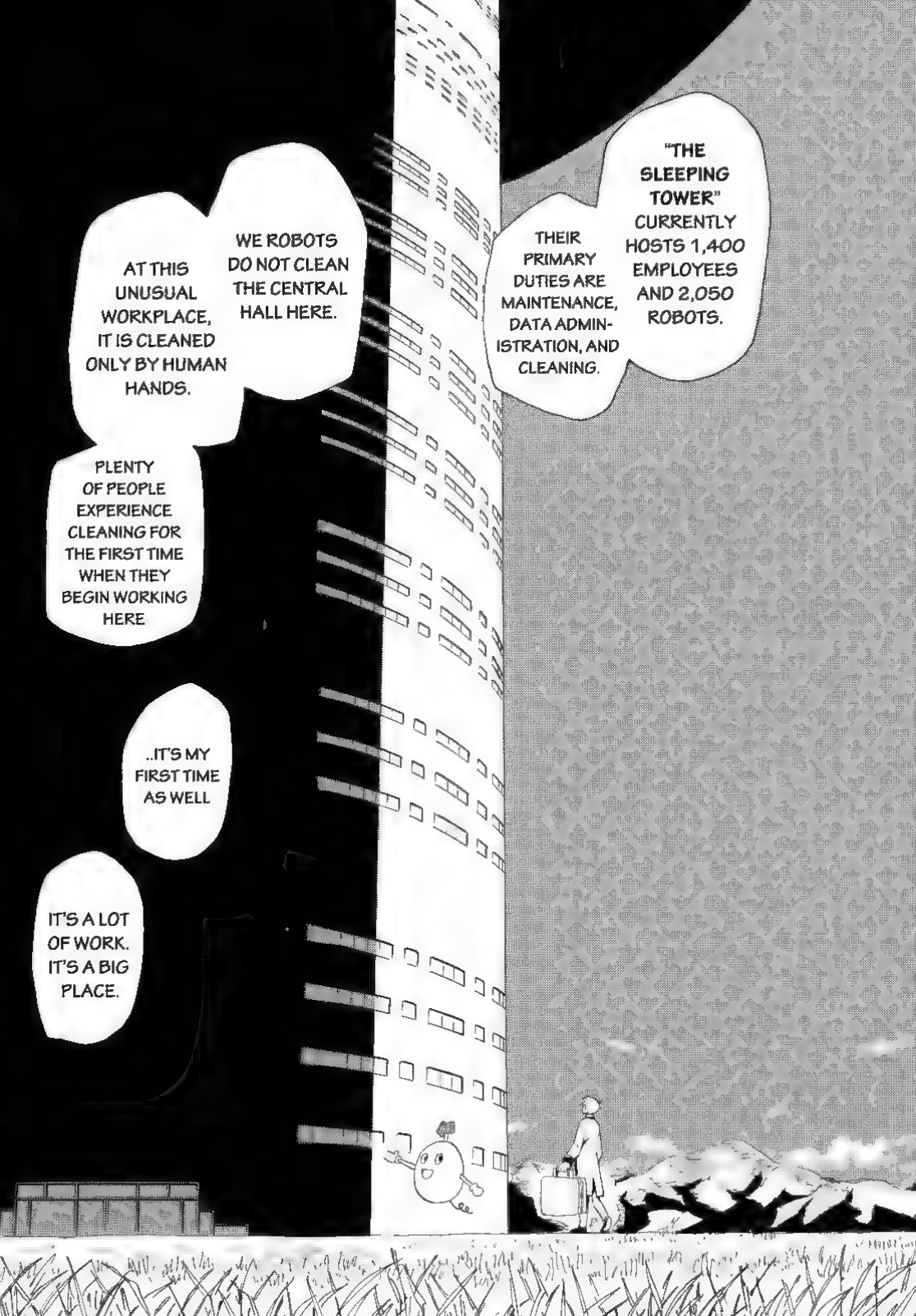
BUT I REMEMBER HER AND WANT TO SEE HER!
BUT...
THERE'S NO WAY OUR RELATION-SHIP'S OVER!!
YOU HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LEARN FROM REI.
REI HAS NOTHING LEFT TO LEARN FROM YOU.
WELL? I GAVE YOU BRIEF AN-SWERS.
ANYWAY, THE "NEXT ONE" IS INTEREST-ING.
WHAT?
IT'S MY FAVOR-ITE.
I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE HER.
I...
FOR...
SLIP

MAS-
TER...
YES.

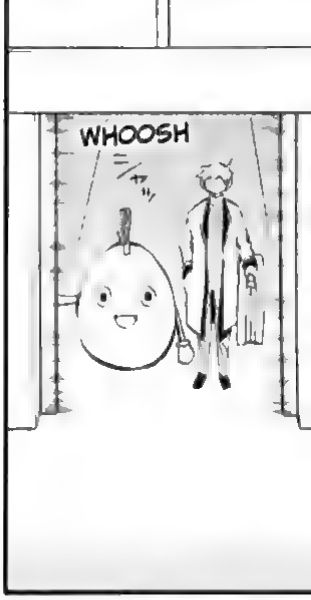
RUNE.
WELL
DONE.

WHO ARE YOU...?
FORTUNA...
WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I CAN'T SEE HER ANY-MORE
YOU JUST SAID YOU COULDN'T SEE HER ANYMORE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
..HUH?
I WAS JUST SPACING OUT.
PERHAPS I WAS DREAMING.
...IT'S NOTHING.

I SEE! ANYWAY, WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
THE CENTER OF NON-LIVING SPIRIT MANAGE-MENT.
ALSO KNOWN AS "THE SLEEPING TOWER."
A DREAM... WITH ONLY A SENSE OF LOSS...
...CAN'T SEE HER?
NO.
I CAME TO SEE HER.

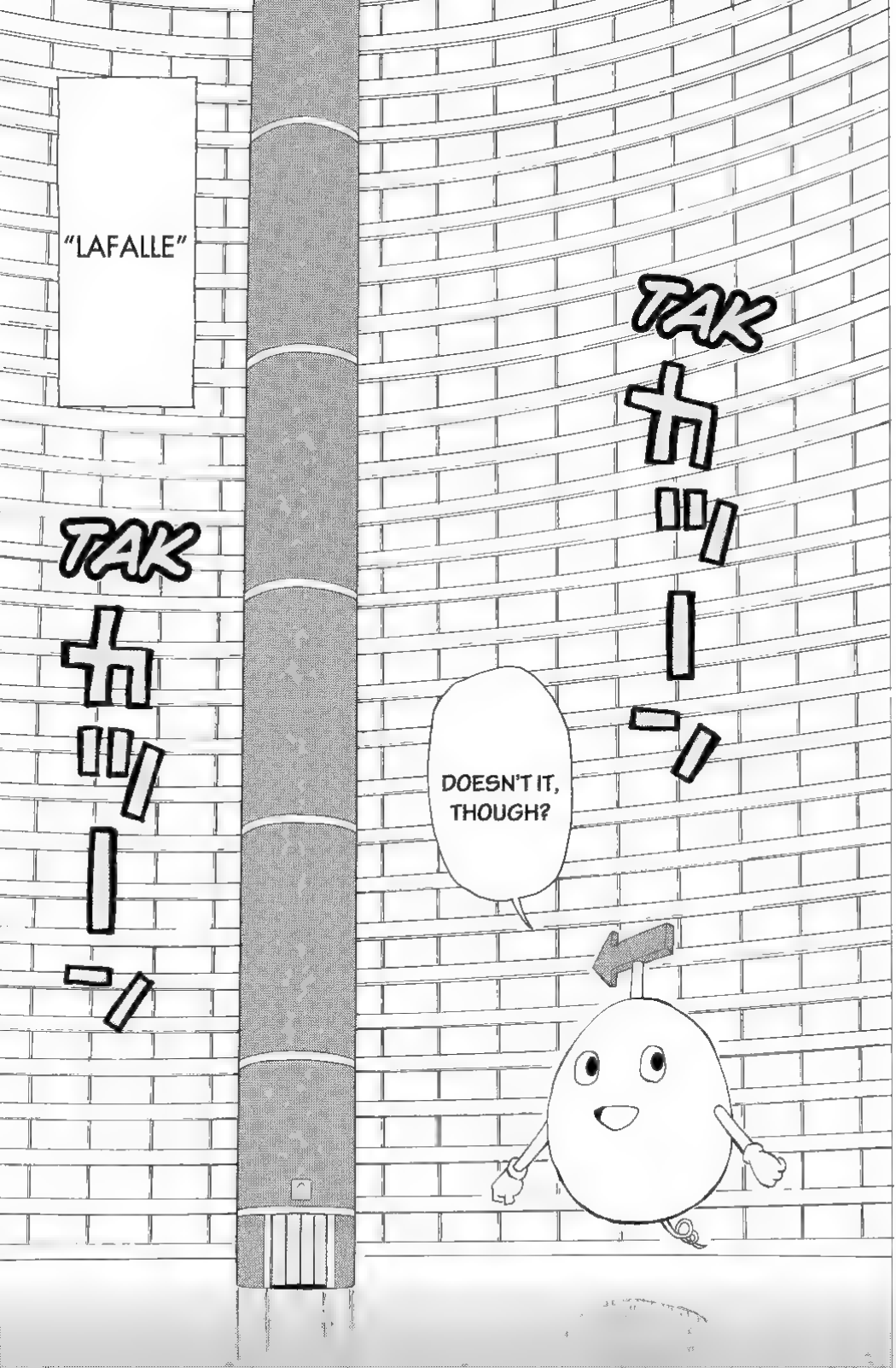

"THE SLEEPING TOWER" CURRENTLY HOSTS 1,400 EMPLOYEES AND 2,050 ROBOTS.
THEIR PRIMARY DUTIES ARE MAINTENANCE, DATA ADMINISTRATION, AND CLEANING.
WE ROBOTS DO NOT CLEAN THE CENTRAL HALL HERE.
AT THIS UNUSUAL WORKPLACE, IT IS CLEANED ONLY BY HUMAN HANDS.
PLENTY OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCE CLEANING FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN THEY BEGIN WORKING HERE
..IT'S MY FIRST TIME AS WELL
IT'S A LOT OF WORK. IT'S A BIG PLACE.

CHAPTER
6
THIS PLACE LOOKS WORTHY OF CLEANING...
TAK
カーーーン
TAK
カーーーン
TAK


WHOOSH

WE ARE NOW ENTERING THE CENTRAL HALL.
ERK

TAK
カーーーン
TAK
カーーーン
I SEE...


"LAFALLE"
TAK
TAK
DOESN'T IT, THOUGH?

DING
HEY!! WEL-COME.
OH. THANK YOU.
I MUST BE GOING NOW.
THE MANAGER WILL GUIDE YOU FROM HERE.
I'M THE MANAGER, CLARO.
YOU MUST BE LAFALLE-KUN.
WEL-COME.
MIND IF I MAKE THE OUTER WALLS TRANSPARENT? ARE YOU OKAY WITH HEIGHTS?
I'M FINE. GO AHEAD.
IT'S 20% MANAGE-MENT AND 80% CLEANING.
I'LL SHOW YOU A-ROUND
GET IN.
WORK-ING HERE ISN'T EASY
NICE TO MEET YOU.
YES.
NICE TO MEET YOU.

ISN'T MANAGING THIS PLACE DIFFICULT?
THERE MUST BE A LOT.
THERE SURE ARE. WE'VE GOT 10 BILLION
WE LET THE ROBOTS HANDLE MOST OF THE ADMIN-ISTRATION, SO IT'S FINE...
THE CLEANING HAS TO BE DONE BY HUMAN HANDS, THOUGH
IT'S NORMALLY THE OPPO-SITE.
IT'S AN EMOTIONAL THING.
AN EMO-TIONAL THING?
...I THINK I UNDER-STAND.
YOU'RE RIGHT... AFTER ALL, IT'S "THE SLEEPING TOWER."

I'M LAFALLE.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
THIS IS LAFALLE-KUN, WHO'S STARTING WITH GROUP F TODAY.
BE NICE TO HIM.

I'M TALL. NICE TO MEET YOU.
NICE TO MEET YOU
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I'M TAKA. NICE TO MEET YOU.
THANK YOU.
OKAY.

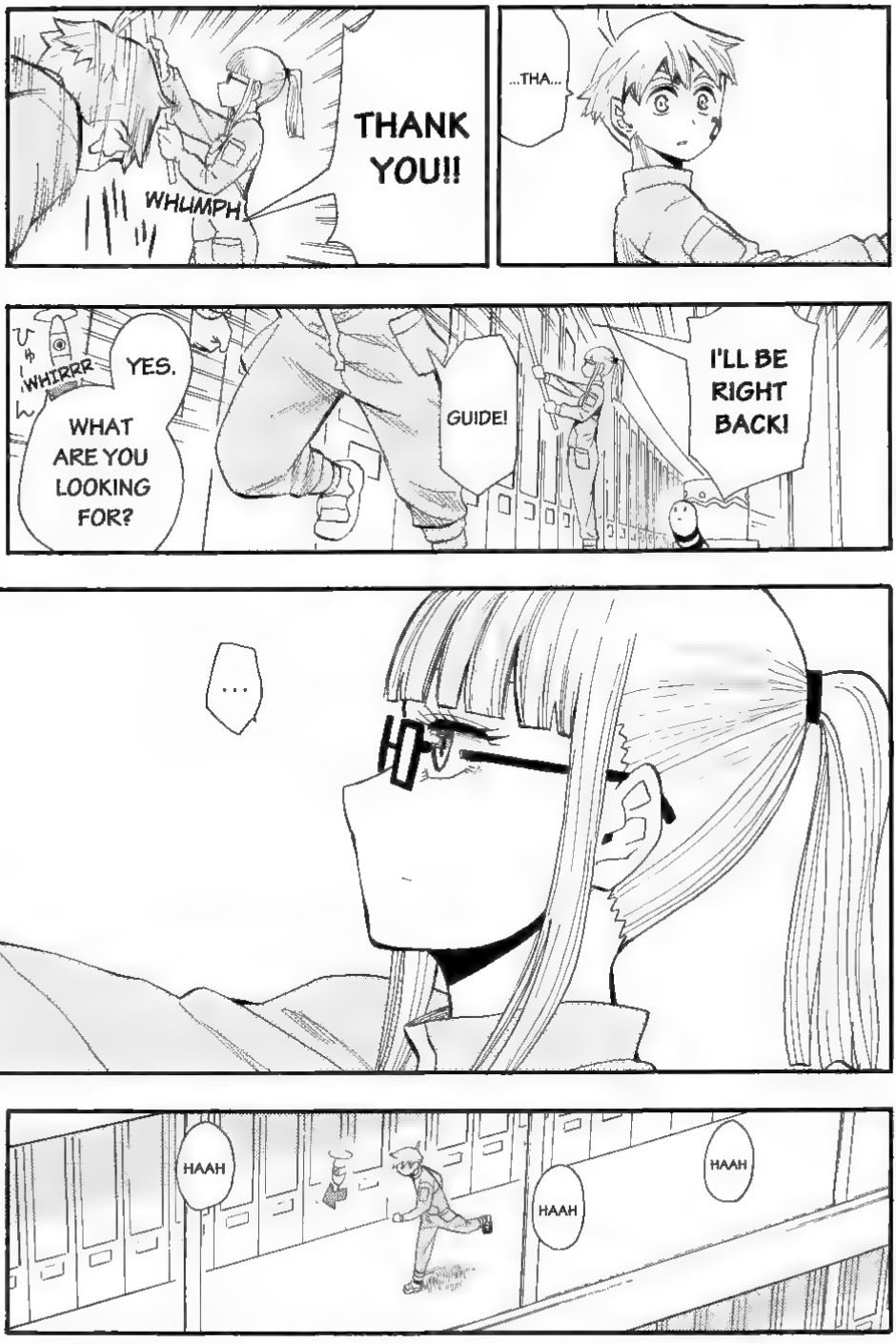
...

IT'S AN ARTIFICIAL HAND.
DID YOU NOTICE?
YES.

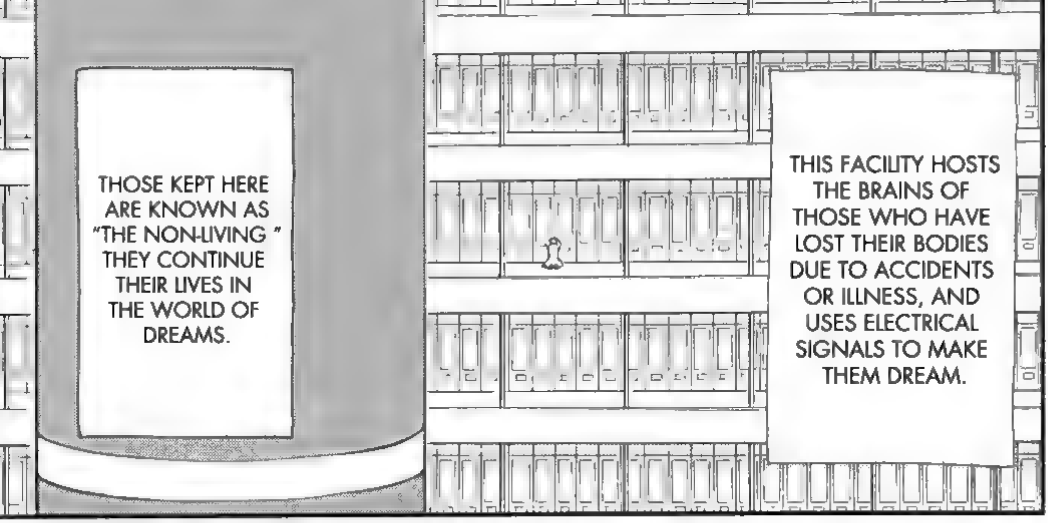
I'M LAPIS.
IT'S A PLEA-SURE.
LIKE-WISE.

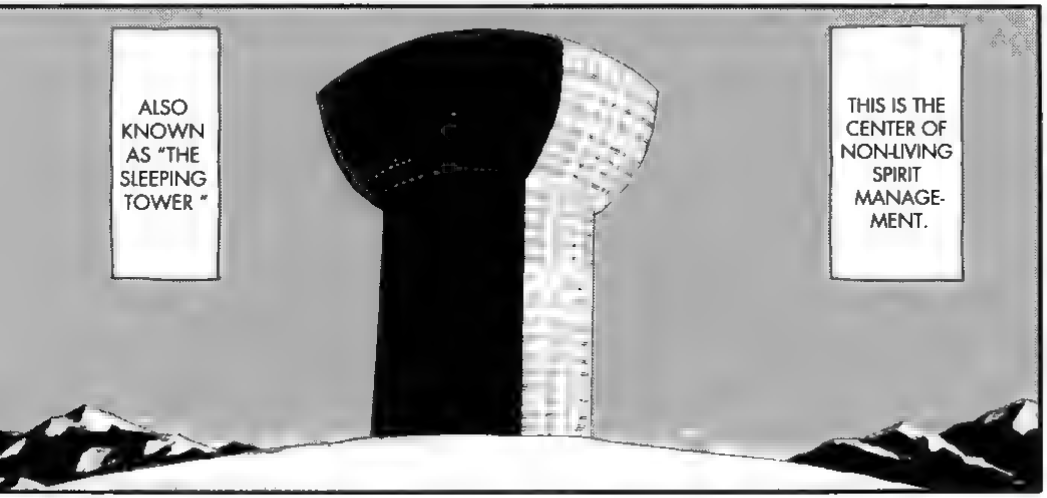
RE-ALLY?
MY RIGHT HAND AND LEFT LEG ARE ARTI-FICIAL.
MY LEFT HAND AND RIGHT LEG ARE ARTIFICIAL.
SO IS MINE.
WE'RE MIRROR IMAGES.
NAH... IT'S OKAY...
UM... SORRY ABOUT THIS.
FINE, THEN...
GET BACK TO WORK AFTER YOUR BREAKS.
SEE YOU LATER, THEN.
BUT I'VE ONLY WORKED HERE A MONTH.
YOU'LL DO GREAT.
LOOKS LIKE YOU GET ALONG.
LAPIS, YOU'RE TRAINING THE NEWBIE.

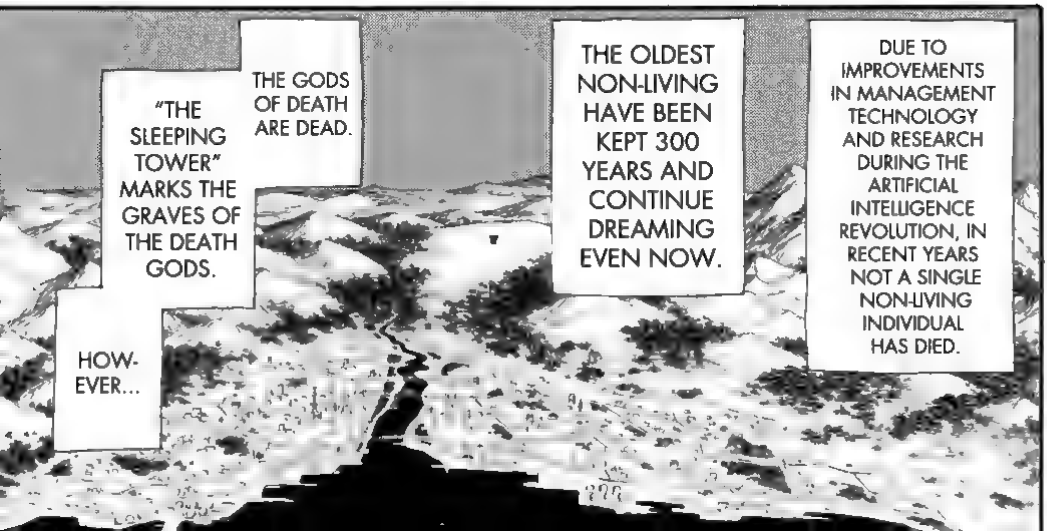
OKAY.
WHEN YOUR CUBE RUNS OUT, YOU'RE DONE FOR THE DAY.
THEN YOU JUST KEEP POLISHING.
キュム SQUEAK
キュム SQUEAK
UH HUH.
RIGHT
ADJUST THE LENGTH OF YOUR BRUSH AND WATER PRESSURE HERE.
PLACE YOUR WATER CUBE HERE.
THE CUBES ARE HEAVY, SO BE CAREFUL.
...ARE YOU RELATED TO THE NON-LIVING AS WELL?
...I KNOW.
THE ONES INSIDE... THE NON-LIVING... ARE STILL ALIVE.
THE CASES ARE STURDY, BUT POLISH THEM GENTLY.
DO YOU KNOW THEIR SEARCH CODE? YOU COULD GO SEE THEM NOW.
MOST PEOPLE WHO WORK HERE HAVE NON-LIVING RELATIVES.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "AS WELL"?
WELL... KIND OF.

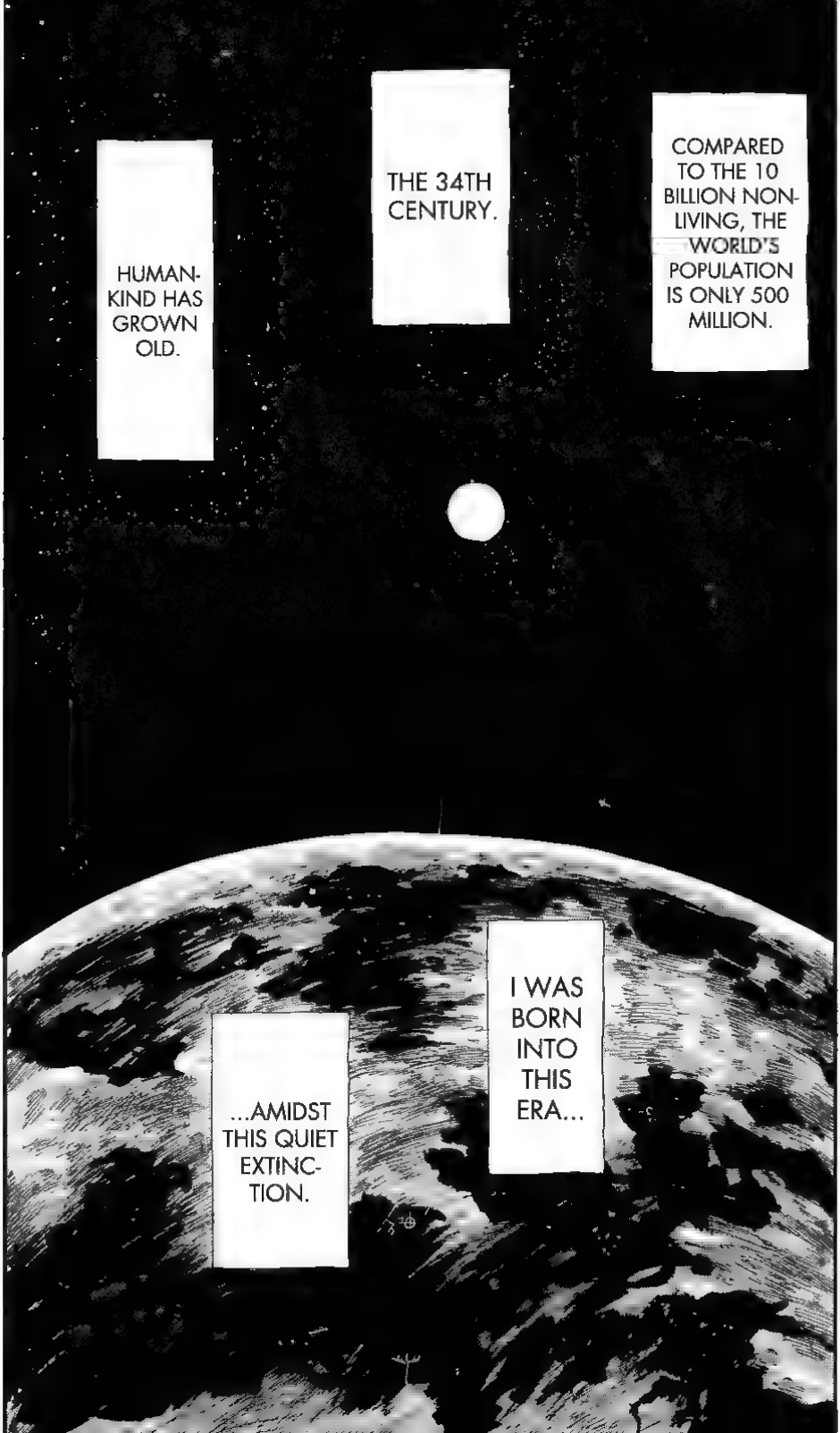

THANK YOU!!
WHUMPH
...THA...
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
GUIDE!
WHIRRR
YES.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
...
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH

HUFF
HUFF
AS PER YOUR REQUEST, THESE ARE NUMBERS ZZF7785...
...AND ZZF7786.
HUFF
HUFF
I'M HERE...
HUFF...
HUFF...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE...
UNCLE AIZEN... RIFFLE...
I CAME TO SEE YOU...
I CAME.
I'LL PROTECT YOU...
FOREVER... I'LL PROTECT YOU BOTH...


THOSE KEPT HERE ARE KNOWN AS "THE NON-LIVING." THEY CONTINUE THEIR LIVES IN THE WORLD OF DREAMS.
THIS FACILITY HOSTS THE BRAINS OF THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR BODIES DUE TO ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESS, AND USES ELECTRICAL SIGNALS TO MAKE THEM DREAM.


ALSO KNOWN AS "THE SLEEPING TOWER."
THIS IS THE CENTER OF NON-LIVING SPIRIT MANAGE-MENT.


"THE SLEEPING TOWER" MARKS THE GRAVES OF THE DEATH GODS.
THE GODS OF DEATH ARE DEAD.
HOW-EVER...
THE OLDEST NON-LIVING HAVE BEEN KEPT 300 YEARS AND CONTINUE DREAMING EVEN NOW.
DUE TO IMPROVEMENTS IN MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH DURING THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REVOLUTION, IN RECENT YEARS NOT A SINGLE NON-LIVING INDIVIDUAL HAS DIED.


HUMAN-KIND HAS GROWN OLD.
THE 34TH CENTURY.
COMPARED TO THE 10 BILLION NON-LIVING, THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS ONLY 500 MILLION.
I WAS BORN INTO THIS ERA...
...AMIDST THIS QUIET EXTINC-TION.

CIRCLE 23
LAFALLE 2

ZZSHHH

WHOA.

TWITCH

IT'S SUNNY OUTSIDE.

...?

THAT WAS SURPRISING.

IT WAS A DREAM?

CHANGE SETTINGS TO LONG NON-REM, LOW STIMU-LATIONS.

YOUR BED'S ALARM SETTINGS HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

GOOD MORNING, LAFALLE SAN.

WILL YOU BE EATING BREAKFAST IN YOUR ROOM OR THE CAFE-TERIA?

...THE CAFE-TERIA.

RAIN.

A DREAM ABOUT RAIN...

I WANT SOMETHING FRIED...

I RECOMMEND A SALAD. YOU HAVE A VITAMIN DEFICIENCY.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

おはようございます GOOD MORNING!

MIND IF I SIT WITH YOU?

GOOD MORN-ING, LAPIS.

GO AHEAD.

GOOD MORNING.

NEWS

...WE HAVE A FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON THE EXPLOSION AT THE CELLULAR RESEARCH FACILITY IN TOWN.

LEAVE ME ALONE.

YOU'RE HAVING FRIED FOOD FOR BREAKFAST AGAIN?

じー
STARE

じー
STARE

UGH

NEWS

I WONDER IF WE'LL GET MORE NON-LIVING.

HOW TROUB-LING.

ANTI-TECHNOLOGY TERRORIST GROUP "ARION" HAS BEEN DECLARED RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK.

...

NOTHING GOOD COMES FROM WATCHING BAD NEWS.

I WAS WATCH-ING THAT.

WHY'D YOU DO THAT?

CHANGE THE CHANNEL. EDUCATION, RANDOM.

HEY.

OKAY.

A CLIONE'S MOUTH!!

WHADDYA MEAN?!

...CHANGE THE CHANNEL. COMEDY, RANDOM.

BUT I DON'T NEED AN EXPLANATION OF HORSES' MATING HABITS...

THERE YOU GO.

NEIGH NEIGH

AND SO, IN THIS MANNER...

AYE AYE, SIR.

WE'RE WORKING HERE TODAY.

MANAGER CLARO.

WORKING HARD?

WHAT? TAKA-SAN IS? WHY?

BY THE WAY...

I HEARD TAKA-SAN'S QUITTING NEXT WEEK.

YES, RIGHT.

IT'S BEEN ABOUT THREE YEARS SINCE YOU GUYS STARTED HERE...

...ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

HEY.

GOOD AFTER-NOON.

HELLO, MANAGER.

HERE'S YOUR FIRST QUESTION.

THESE THINGS INSIDE THE CASES.

WHAT QUES-TIONS?

ARE YOU GOING TO ASK US YOUR QUESTIONS?

YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

AREN'T THEY ALIVE?

I BELIEVE THEY'RE ALIVE.

...ARE ALIVE?

DO YOU THINK THE NON-LIVING...

I HAVEN'T.

NOPE.

HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GHOSTS HERE?

QUESTION TWO.

...WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

SNAP!

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

I SEE. THANK YOU.

RUMOR HAS IT HE'S CHOOSING THE NEXT CANDIDATE FOR MANAGER WITH HIS QUESTIONS...

BUT IT'S A MYSTERY AS TO WHICH ANSWERS QUALIFY YOU TO BE A CANDIDATE.

ONCE YOU'VE WORKED HERE FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS, THE MANAGER ASKS YOU THESE WEIRD QUESTIONS.

AN OLDER EMPLOYEE TOLD ME.

YOU WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF MANAGER IF YOU THOUGHT THE NON-LIVING WERE DEAD.

OH, RIGHT...

THIS PLACE EXISTS BECAUSE THE NON-LIVING ARE ALIVE.

THE NON-LIVING ARE DEAD, AND YOU'VE SEEN GHOSTS.

...MAY-BE?

HUH... MAYBE IT'S THE ANSWERS THAT GO AGAINST COMMON SENSE.

DON'T YOU FIND HIS QUESTIONS ODD?

MAYBE THERE'S A DEAD PERSON AND HE'S TRYING TO FIND OUT...

SOMEONE MUST'VE SEEN ITS GHOST!!

...IF ANYONE'S NOTICED HE'S HIDING IT...?!

WHAT IF...

HEY.

THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS.

...

...YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHERE ARE YOUR RELATIVES?

I SEE...

A LOT OF PEOPLE SEEM TO QUIT ONCE THEIR CLEANING REACHES THE PLACE WHERE THEIR NON-LIVING RELATIVES ARE SLEEPING.

I WONDER WHY TAKA-SAN'S QUITTING.

TAKA-SAN'S NO EXCEPTION.

MINE ARE... I'LL PROBABLY GET TO THAT AREA AROUND NEXT SPRING...

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

HONESTLY, I MISSED MY CHANCE TO QUIT.

I PASSED THEM RIGHT AROUND THE TIME I STARTED...

...

HMMM...

THAT'S SOON WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

I DUNNO. I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

...EVERY DAY WE POLISHED THE CASES OF THE SLEEPING NON-LIVING.

FROM MORNING TO NIGHT...

WE SPENT MOST OF OUR TIME WORKING IN SILENCE.

BECAUSE OF IT, WE HAD NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT.

...

...

THAT WAS ALL OUR LIVES WERE.

SLEEP, WAKE, POLISH.

SLEEP, WAKE, POLISH.

...THINGS AS TRIFLING AS CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD EASILY FLY FAR AWAY.

OH... I WAS JUST IN INDIA.

UH... REALLY...

NAMA-STE.

HUH?

SNAP

...

AND DOING SUCH MONO-TONOUS WORK IN A QUIET PLACE..

...FAR ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

IT WOULD LEAP...

DO YOU WANT TO GO SEE WHERE YOUR PARENTS WORK NEXT WEEK?

LA-FALLE...

WHIRRR
ウィーン

...

THEY SAID THEY WANT TO SEE YOU.

WE GOT THESE TICKETS.

IT'LL BE FINE. THEY'LL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU.

IF I GO, PEOPLE WILL LOOK AT ME FUNNY.

NAH.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOOD PLAYMATE TO RIFFLE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER LAFALLE.

HELLO, UNCLE AND AUNTIE.

AIZEN-SAN, RIFFLE-CHAN.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

LA-FALLE.

WHY ARE YOU HIDING?

COME ON, LAFALLE.

IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT YOU GET TO SEE THE INSIDE OF AN ORBITING ELEVATOR.

COME. WE'LL SHOW YOU AROUND.

AN EXPLO-SION...

BREEP

AN EXPLO-SION HAS OCCURRED INSIDE THE FACILITY. PLEASE EVACUATE.

BREEP

?!

HNGH!

WHAT?!

!

DADDY!!

RUMBLE

WAIT! MY DOCU-MENTS!

BREEP

WHOA!

BREEP

THERE ARE MULTIPLE EXPLO-SIONS.

EVAC-UATE IMMEDI-ATELY.

BOOM

GWAH!!

AHHHH!!

ZU JOLT

YOU GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN YOUR DAY-DREAMS!!

びっくりした STARTLED ME.

OH, SORRY. I WAS JUST CAUGHT UP IN AN EXPLOSION.

WHAT?!

WHA--

びっくりしたのは I'M THE ONE WHO WAS STARTLED!

ドキ BA-DUM BA-DUM

MY PARENTS WERE SEVERELY INJURED. BEFORE THEIR BRAINS COULD BE RECOVERED...

...THEY DIED.

IT WASN'T A DAY-DREAM.

IT WAS A PAST EVENT.

I LOST MY LEFT HAND AND RIGHT LEG AND HAD THEM REPLACED WITH ARTIFICIAL LIMBS.

THEY WERE SENT TO THE "SLEEPING TOWER" AS NON-LIVING.

...SUFFERED SERIOUS INJURIES TO THEIR BODIES, BUT THEIR UNSCATHED BRAINS WERE RECOVERED.

RIFFLE, AND UNCLE AIZEN WHO PROTECTED THE TWO OF US...

I SOUGHT EMPLOY-MENT AT THE "SLEEPING TOWER."

NOW ORPHANED, I WAS BROUGHT UP BY A STATE FACILITY UNTIL I CAME OF AGE.

...

SNAP

GOOD WORK.

BYE, TAKA.

TAKE CARE.

TAKE CARE, GUYS.

BYE.

FLOAT

ブーン

BEEP

ピッ

I'LL FIND WORK ONCE I GET SICK OF HANGING AROUND.

I'M HEADING HOME...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

TALL-KUN, HUH? A NEWBIE SHOULD ARRIVE IN TWO OR THREE DAYS. YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH LAPIS-KUN AND LAFALLE-KUN UNTIL THEN.

ME.

WHO WAS WORKING WITH TAKA-KUN?

トール TALL

タカ TAKA

クレオ CLEO

THE THREE OF YOU WERE CLOSE.

SINCE WE STARTED THE SAME DAY, I GUESS I'VE KNOWN CLEO FOR YEN YEARS, TOO.

I WORKED WITH TAKA FOR TEN YEARS.

WE LOVED ROBO-CAT.

YEAH. WE HAD SIMILAR TASTES.

SOUNDS GOOD.

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME AND CLEO?

...

OKAY, BUT WHAT IS THAT. ?

REALLY? YOU SHOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING SOONER.

I LIKE ROBO-CAT, TOO.

ネコ?
CAT?

WHAT IS THAT?

YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT THAT.

ANCIENT PEOPLES SURE KNEW HOW TO MAKE ART.

UNDER THE SAND.

DID YOU HEAR? THEY FOUND A SPHINX THAT LOOKS JUST LIKE ROBO-CAT.

THIS JERK... HE ALWAYS LOOKS SULLEN WHEN HE'S AROUND ME...

HHHZZSSSH

I HOPE WE'LL GET ALONG...

I WONDER WHAT THE NEWBIE'S LIKE...?

HOUTARO!!

ZSSH

RAIN

ZZSH

AGAIN I'VE BEEN HAVING THIS DREAM A LOT LATELY

MISTER PRIEST!

PLEASE STOP!!

RETURN TO THE PLACE YOU BELONG!

THIS ISN'T WHERE YOU BELONG!

THIS IS THE LAND OF THE LIVING!!

CAN YOU HEAR ME, HOUTAROU?!

ZZZSSSSH

BUT... YOU'VE MOURNED OVER THAT ENOUGH ALREADY!

IT'S BECAUSE I WAS TOO DRUNK TO NOTICE THEM LEAVING...

LET GO, AKARI!! THIS IS MY FAULT!

I CAN SEE YOUR FACES TODAY.

...CRY-
ING...?

WHY
ARE
THOSE
TWO...

ALLOW
ME TO
INTRODUCE
YOU.

I'M TALIO.
NICE TO
MEET YOU.

HE'S
GROUP F'S
NEWEST
MEMBER,
TALIO-
KUN.

YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH ME.

NICE TO MEET YOU.

THE PLEASURE IS MINE.

OH...

NOTH-ING.

WHAT'S WRONG?

AHHH!!

?!

...I MET HIM IN A DREAM...

I CAN'T TELL HER...

AGH—

GH—!

GHOST!

A GHO...

LA—

LAFALLE-SAN!

WHA— WHAT?

UM, TALIO-KUN?

DASH!

IT WAS WEARING A HOOD!!

IT CAME UP THROUGH THE FLOOR!

THROUGH THE FLOOR!!

IS THIS ONE OF THOSE

CIRCLE 24
LAFALLE 3

EEEEK!

IT CAME UP THROUGH THE FLOOR!!

RIGHT THROUGH IT!!

WEARING A HOOD!!

...A GHOST?

IS THIS ONE OF THOSE PLACES?!

IS IT?!

TAK... TAK... TAK...

HALF? HALF WHAT?

!

THEY'RE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

HUH? THERE ARE NON-LIVING HERE.

THEY'RE HALF

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ONE OF THOSE PLACES"?

..HUH?

HEY.

コツ…
コツ…
TAK
TAK
TAK
コツ…
TAK
コツ…

!

MANAGER!! A GHOST!

A GHOST...

OH, IT'S THE MANAGER.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

JUST ME.

NO, I DIDN'T... TALIO-KUN'S THE ONE WHO SAW IT.

YOU BOTH SAW IT?

A GHOST..

...THAT TALIO-KUN SAW A GHOST.

LAFALLE-KUN, DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE...

YES, SIR.

...TALIO-KUN, COULD YOU JOIN ME IN THE MANAGER'S OFFICE?

...

UM... WHAT'S GOING ON?

JUST COME WITH ME.

...ONE OF THOSE PLACES? BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH...?

THE NON-LIVING WHO SLEEP HERE IN THE CASES ARE BRAINS, BUT THEY'RE STILL ALIVE.

IF ANYTHING, ISN'T THIS PLACE THE PINNACLE OF LIFE?

HALF... WHAT...?

HALF...?

WHAT'D YOU DISCUSS WITH THE MANAGER?

SORRY. I CAN'T SAY.

HUH.

YOU'RE CLOSE FRIENDS ALREADY.

I'M FOR-BIDDEN TO SAY.

THAT'S THE THING.

YOU CAN'T? WHY NOT?

FOR-BIDDEN...?

WHISPER WHISPER

...

IN ANY CASE, LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT IT ANYMORE...

G-GOOD MORNING.

HELLO.

LAPIS.

HELLO.

I JUST DID.

WHY?

YOU JUST DID, HUH?

WHEN I SAW TALIO, I THOUGHT YOU TWO MIGHT GET ALONG.

PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THIS CONVER-SATION...

I HAD THE SAME THOUGHT.

I BET HE DRINKS A LOT.

DOESN'T HE SEEM LIKE HE LIKES HIS LIQUOR?

UNCLE AIZEN, TALIO, AND I WERE DRINKING TOGETHER FOR SOME REASON.

...TODAY'S TRIP WAS A STRANGE SIGHT.

WE ALL LOOKED LIKE PRETTY WORTHLESS TYPES.

ARE YOU GOING TO TALIO'S WELCOMING PARTY TODAY?

YEAH.

CHAOS...

MANAGER CLARO WATCHED THE THREE OF US WITH DISGUST.

BUT THEY WERE ALL LIKE THIS.

かっはっはっはっ

HAHAHAHA

I SAW TALIO'S FACE SEVERAL TIMES AFTER THAT.

I CAN'T DRINK AT ALL.

オレンジジュースで I'LL HAVE AN ORANGE JUICE.

OH...

SORRY.

ZZSHHH

I'M PUTTING THESE AWAY.

WE HAD TONS OF LEFTOVER BEER

I SEE...

REAL-LY?

APPARENTLY EVERYONE HAD ASSUMED TALIO WAS A BIG DRINKER.

HH

ZZSHHH

THE RAIN DREAM.

THIS DREAM AGAIN.

HEY, TALIO.

...THAT I RECOGNIZE THAT I'M DREAMING WHEN I SEE IT NOW.

I'VE SEEN IT SO MANY TIMES. .

I'LL GIVE HIM A DRINK.

ZZSHHH

IT'S JUST A DREAM

I'LL DO WHAT I WANT.

ZZSHHH

I STOPPED HAVING THE RAIN DREAM FOR A WHILE.

URGH

*LAFALLE-SAN, IT'S MORNING.*

TALIO MUST REALLY HATE LIQUOR.

MY UN-EVENTFUL LIFE CONTINUED.

MY DAYS AT WORK REMAINED UNCHANGED.

SINCE THEY WERE FANTASIES, I COULD SET THE STAGE AS I PLEASED ..

MY FLIGHTS OF FANCY DURING WORK WENT UNRESTRAINED.

あ" URGH

BUT I COULDN'T CONTROL THEM.

I WAS GROWING MEDICINAL HERBS SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE.

WHERE'D YOU GO TODAY?

BUT THAT WAS INTERESTING IN ITSELF.

I DON'T KNOW... THE YUCATAN PENINSULA? I WAS MAKING SHOES

THEY'RE SO CLEAR.

MINE, TOO.

MY FANTASIES HAVE BEEN GOING WELL LATELY.

THAT'S NOT GOOD.

IT'S NOT.

NOW I FEEL HAZY JUST EATING.

CHEW CHEW もぐ もぐ

CHEW CHEW もぐ もぐ

I LEARNED UP TO CHAPTER THREE.

AREN'T I SMART?

I MADE HIM MY APPRENTICE, BUT...

...HE HASN'T LEARNED ANY OF HIS SOUL STUDIES.

ONLY EAST'S BAKING IS IMPROVING.

HMPH.

YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO

BY THE TIME I WAS YOUR AGE, I WAS DOING CHAPTER FIVE.

HURK

SIR?!

FWIP

*LAFALLE-KUN, DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?*

MAYBE IT'S ABOUT *THAT.*

WHAT DOES HE WANT?

SIR.

YES,

WHEN YOU FINISH WORK TODAY, COULD YOU COME BY THE MANAGER'S OFFICE?

WE'LL REACH THE CASES OF YOUR RELATIVES SOON, WON'T WE?

WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE QUITTING.

HAD IT BEEN SO LONG ALREADY?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

MANY EMPLOYEES QUIT WHEN THE REACH THE CASES OF THEIR RELATIVES

WELL, YOU NEED TO TURN IN YOUR RESIGNATION FORM ONE MONTH BEFORE YOUR DESIRED DATE.

AS LONG AS YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE TODAY

YOU CAN WAIT.

UM... I DON'T KNOW.

LAFALLE-KUN,

DO YOU LIKE THIS JOB?

...

PARDON ME.

I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

...I THOUGHT THAT IT WASN'T SO BAD.

THE MOMENT I SAID IT ..

I'M NOT SURE...

HUH?

...

WHAT? YOU'RE QUITTING?

...

TALIO, WOULD YOU BE SAD IF I QUIT?

...

...

WHAT ABOUT YOU, LAPIS?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF I QUIT?

I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET

YOU'RE A GOOD GUY.

I'D BE SAD IF YOU QUIT...

...BUT IT'S ONLY BEEN A YEAR SINCE WE MET.

I DON'T CARE WHETHER YOU'RE HERE OR NOT.

THAT'S THAT.

YES, SIR.

THAT'S THAT, THEN.

REAL-LY?

YOU PROBABLY WANT TO TAKE YOUR TIME ALONE.

...SHOULD I LEAVE?

YEAH.

YOU'RE GOING TO POLISH BOTH OF THOSE CASES, THEN?

...HEY.

SQUIRK

JUST LIKE ALWAYS.

YOU CAN STAY.

I'M BACK.

UNCLE AIZEN...

RIFFLE...

HEY, LAFALLE.

HEY, LAFALLE.

I'M GLAD, I'M GLAD.

YOU LOOK WELL. I'M GLAD.

...HEY, LAFALLE.

I THINK I WAS BORN TO PROTECT YOU.

I THINK I WAS BORN TO REPAY A DEBT TO YOU.

NOTHING MAKES US HAPPIER THAN SEEING YOU WELL.

THAT'S WHY WE DON'T REGRET LOSING OUR BODIES.

BUT THE MOMENT I MET YOU, FOR SOME REASON, I THOUGHT, "THANK YOU."

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT I OWE YOU.

SORRY, SORRY.

WELL, THAT'S HOW IT IS.

DAD, DON'T SAY IT ALL BEFORE I GET TO TALK!

YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY FOREVER!

DON'T CRY!! I ORDER YOU NOT TO!

DON'T CRY.

BYE.

THANKS.

GOOD-BYE.

THANK YOU.

...NOW OF ALL TIMES?

THIS IS THE WORST.

WHY IS MY FANTASY GOING EXACTLY AS I WANT...

...THAT NOTHING WOULD CHANGE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WERE HERE.

I THOUGHT...

...I FELT SORT OF RELIEVED.

I WONDER WHY?

BUT WHEN I HEARD YOU WEREN'T QUITTING...

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

I DIDN'T DISLIKE CLEANING.

I HAD NO-WHERE ELSE TO GO.

THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS I DIDN'T QUIT.

AND I FELT THAT I UNDERSTOOD MYSELF WHEN I LOST MYSELF IN THOUGHT.

...WAS "BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, HALF..."

...STILL BOTHERED ME.

THE WAY TALIO SAID THE TOWER...

ABOUT THE "GHOST" TALIO SAW A YEAR AGO.

I WAS CURIOUS, TOO.

.. BUT NEVER FOUND AN ANSWER

I THOUGHT ABOUT IT ON MY OWN...

I NEVER ASKED HIM ABOUT IT.

AND THUS, TIME PASSED.

BECAUSE HIS ILLNESS ATTACKED HIS BRAIN, HE NEVER STAYED HERE AS A NON-LIVING.

MANAGER CLARO PASSED AWAY.

...TALIO BECAME THE NEXT MANAGER.

AS PER MANAGER CLARO'S RECOMMEN-DATION BEFORE HIS DEATH...

GET IT TOGETHER.

YEAH, BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DRUNKEN BEHAVIOR.

TALIO, WITH YOU IN CHARGE, MANAGER CLARO CAN REST EASY.

EVERYONE CELEBRATED TALIO'S INAUGURA-TION.

STRANGELY, NONE OF THE EMPLOYEES OBJECTED.

WEIRD?

I MIGHT HAVE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK TODAY.

COMING UP THROUGH THE FLOOR

I SEE SOME-THING WEIRD.

SOME-TIMES.

AM I REALLY THAT BAD WHEN I'M DRUNK?

HURM...?

THROUGH THE FLOOR..?

...LAPIS AND I...

IN MY TENTH YEAR..

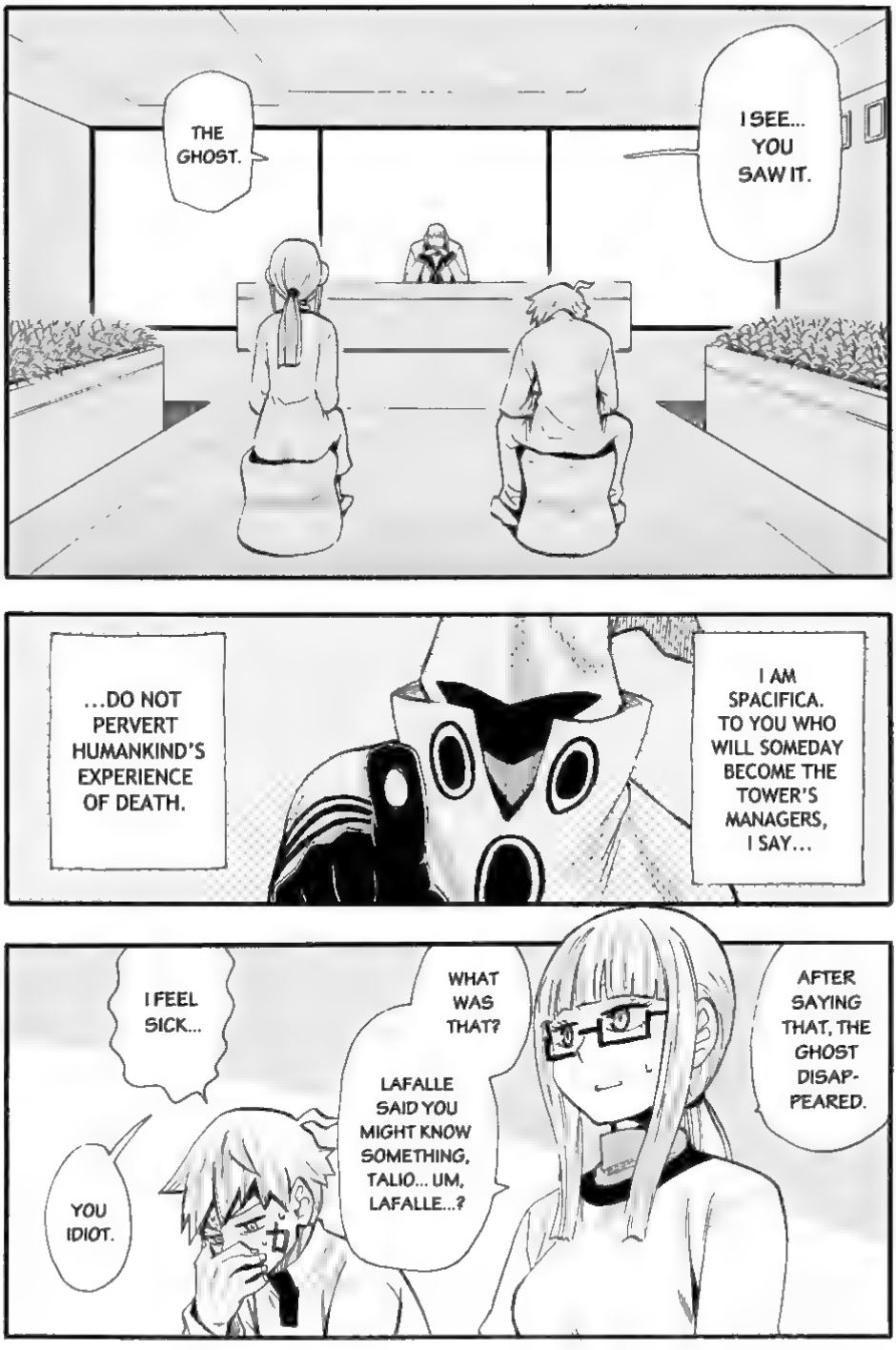
...MET A GHOST.

I AM SPACIFICA. TO YOU WHO WILL SOMEDAY BECOME THE TOWER'S MANAGERS, I SAY...

...DO NOT PERVERT HUMANITY'S EXPERIENCE OF DEATH.

CIRCLE 25
LAFALLE 4

ALSO KNOWN AS "THE SLEEPING TOWER."
THE CENTER OF NON-LIVING SPIRIT MANAGE-MENT.
TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED.
SINCE WE STARTED WORKING HERE...


THE GHOST.
I SEE... YOU SAW IT.
...DO NOT PERVERT HUMANKIND'S EXPERIENCE OF DEATH.
I AM SPACIFICA. TO YOU WHO WILL SOMEDAY BECOME THE TOWER'S MANAGERS, I SAY...
I FEEL SICK...
WHAT WAS THAT?
AFTER SAYING THAT, THE GHOST DISAP-PEARED.
LAFALLE SAID YOU MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING, TALIO... UM, LAFALLE...?
YOU IDIOT.

SEVEN YEARS AGO, WHEN YOU SAW IT. .
MANAGER CLARO TOLD ME NOT TO SAY ANY-THING
NO, WE HAVEN'T.
...HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE?
BETWEEN THE TIME YOU SAW THE GHOST LAST NIGHT AND NOW...
WELL. . IT'S FINE AS LONG AS YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING...
I-I WAS TOLD NOT TO TELL ANYONE...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S SO INTER-ESTING?
SAY WHAT? TALIO'S SEEN IT, TOO? SEVEN YEARS AGO?
AND YOU NEVER MENTIONED THAT?
ESPECIALLY YOU, LAPIS-SAN.
PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.
...!
WELL, THEN. FIRST, THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE "GHOST" IS...
IS THIS THE KIND OF PERSON SHE IS?
HMPH
YOU BETCHA.

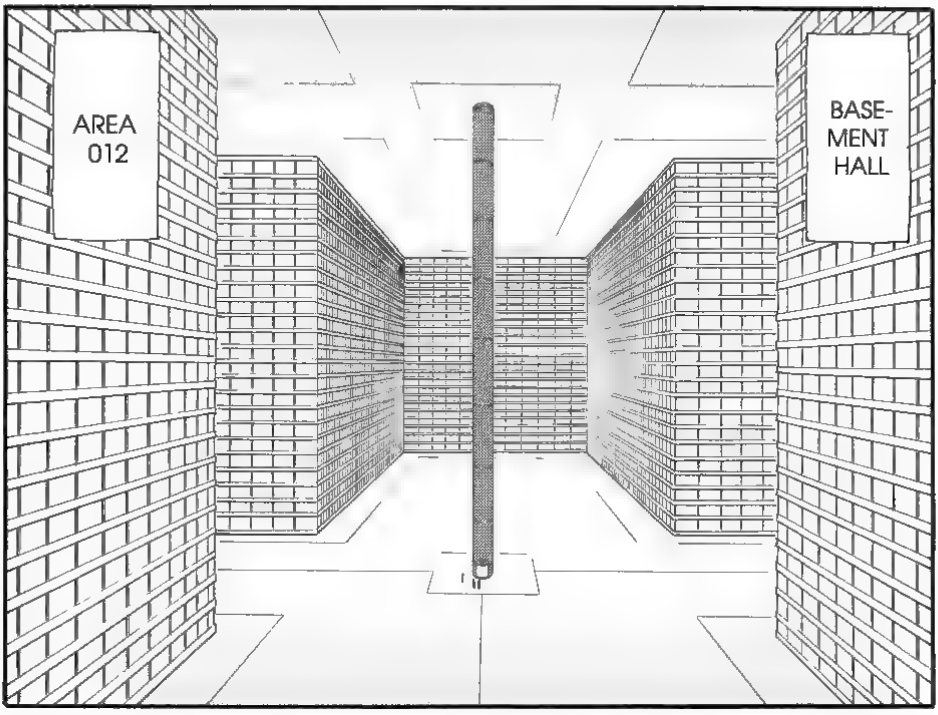
...A MYSTERY.

WHAT ARE YOU...?! IT DISAP-PEARED?!
DWLIMP
ズデン
A GHO--!
GHO...!
IT DOESN'T APPEAR ON ANY OF THE RECORDING DEVICES HERE. THE SECURITY VIDEO ONLY SHOWS YOU TWO ACTING SURPRISED IN THE HALLWAY, ALL ALONE.
COMING UP THROUGH THE FLOOR...
WHA..?

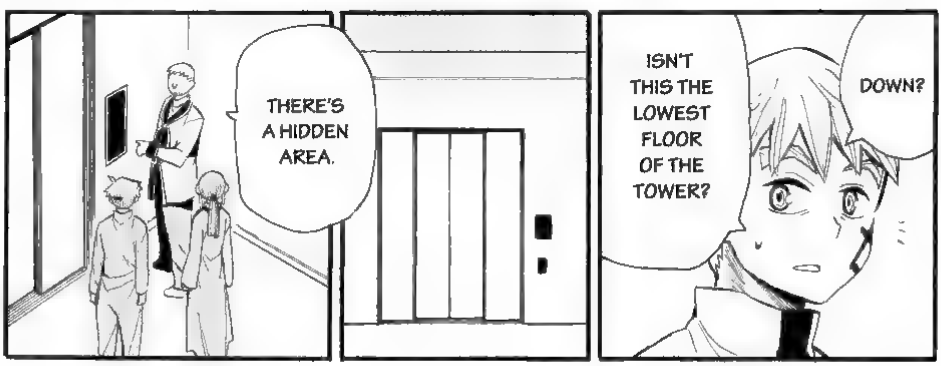
YES. BECAUSE OF THAT..
"TO YOU WHO WILL SOMEDAY BECOME THE TOWER'S MANAGERS, I SAY..."
DOES THAT MEAN...
...NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THE GHOST SAID...
. .FOR SOME REASON, EVERY MANAGER HAS SEEN THE GHOST, WHILE THE OTHER EMPLOYEES HAVE NOT.
IT'S A TOTAL MYSTERY HOWEVER..

...YOU BOTH ARE NOW CANDIDATES FOR THE NEXT MANAGER POSITION.

I'M JUST HUNG-OVER.
I AGREE THAT IT SOUNDS LIKE A PAIN IN THE ASS, THOUGH.
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A DRAG.
...TRY NOT TO LOOK SO MISERABLE ABOUT IT.
I'M BUSY, TOO.
I NEED TO SLEEP.
I'M GOING TO BE BUSY WATCHING ROBO-CAT.
BY THE WAY, YOU BOTH HAVE THE DAY OFF, DON'T YOU?
ANY AFTER-NOON PLANS?
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
BEEP
WE'LL HOLD A "STUDY GROUP."
LET'S MEET AFTER LUNCH IN BASEMENT HALL AREA 012.
AWWW...
THAT'S AN ORDER.


AREA 012
BASE-MENT HALL

WE'LL TAKE ELEVATOR SEVEN DOWN EVEN FARTHER.
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO COME CLEAN HERE THE YEAR AFTER NEXT.
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE BASEMENT BEFORE.


THERE'S A HIDDEN AREA.
ISN'T THIS THE LOWEST FLOOR OF THE TOWER?
DOWN?

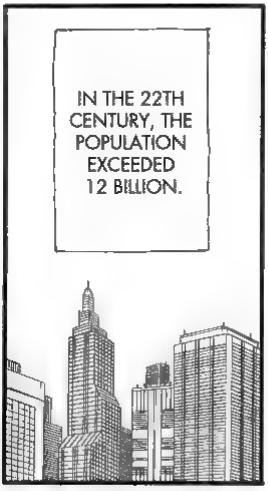
CODE-NAME...
..."AREA SPACIFICA."
AREA SPACIFICA

THIS SPACE IS COMPLETELY ISOLATED FROM THE NETWORK.
BY THE WAY, THERE ARE NO ROBOTS HERE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE...?
WH- WHAT THE HECK...?!
ANCIENT RUINS?!
THIS WAY.
CLACK
I WAS SHOCKED AT FIRST, TOO.
THE ENTIRE AREA IS ISOLATED?! IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?!
I'VE SEEN THIS IN THE DATA BANK.
IT LOOKS LIKE AN ANCIENT CLASS-ROOM.
WHAT IS THIS...? WHAT...?
WE WILL USE INK PENS AND PAPER. NOTES DO NOT REMOVE THEM FROM THIS ROOM
TELL NO ONE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS HERE.

OUR SUBJECT IS HISTORY.
I WILL NOW BEGIN THE LECTURE.

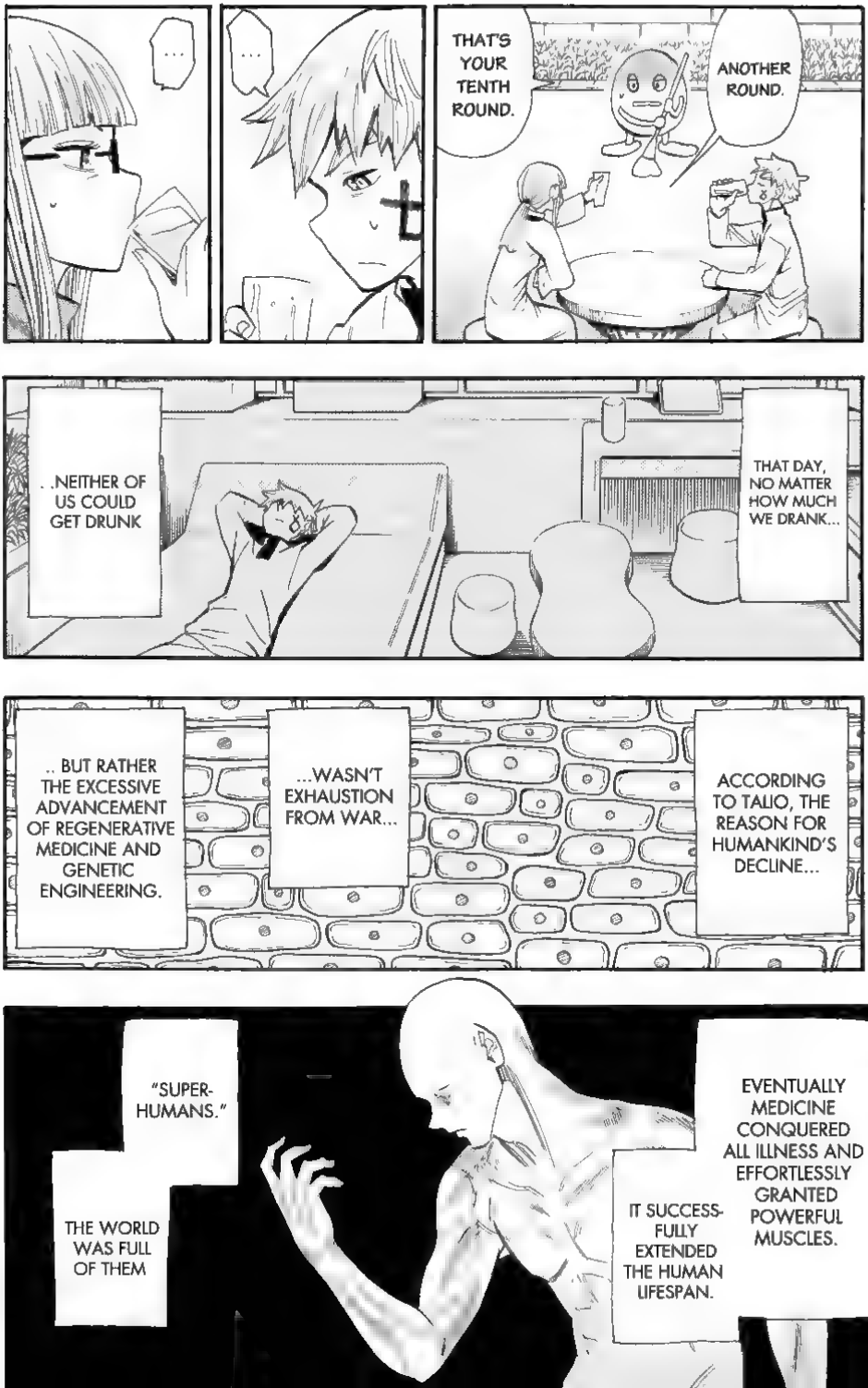
THE TRUTH BEHIND HUMANITY'S DECLINE.

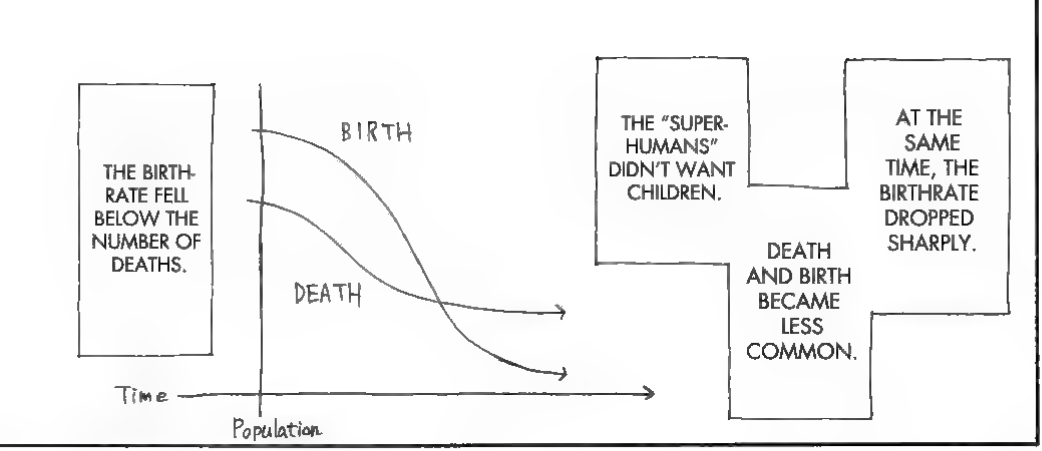
BY THE TIME HUMANKIND GREW WEARY AND CEASED FIGHTING IN THE 27TH CENTURY, THE POPULATION WAS DOWN TO THREE BILLION.
AFTER THAT, IT NEVER NCREASED ANY FURTHER
OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS, THE POPULATION SLOWLY BEGAN TO DROP, DUE TO INTERNATIONAL AND RELGIOUS WARS

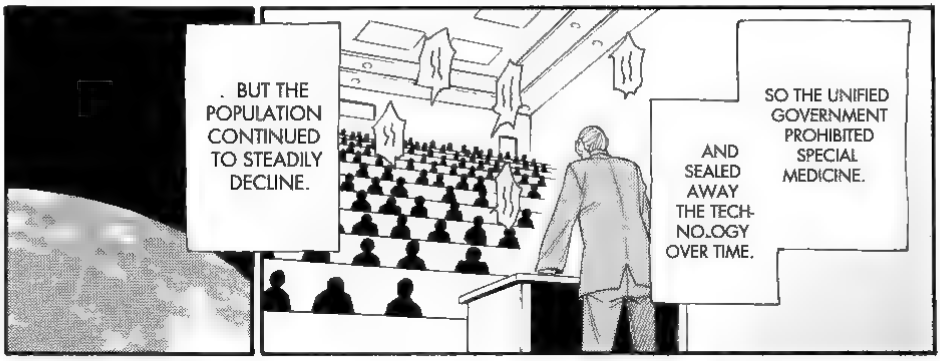

IN THE 22TH CENTURY, THE POPULATION EXCEEDED 12 BILLION.

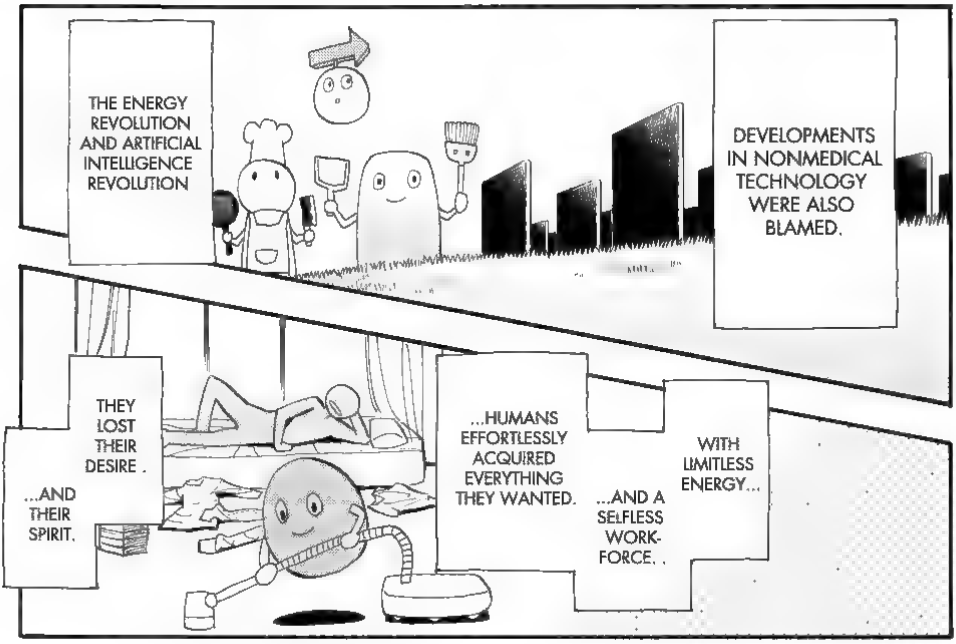
MANKIND HASN'T WAGED WAR SINCE THE 23TH CENTURY.
...IT'S ALL A LIE. THE HISTORY PASSED DOWN FROM MANAGER TO MANAGER IN THE SLEEPING TOWER IS DIFFERENT.
THAT'S THE HISTORY WE KNEW.
OVER GENERATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT "TRAINED" HUMANKIND TO DESPISE CONFLICT.
...
THAT HUMANKIND WAS CORNERED BY WARFARE IS A LIE SPREAD BY THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT.
I AM ABOUT TO DESCRIBE TO YOU...
...A HISTORY OF SUFFERING, SHARED BY THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT
...WHAT YOU SHOULD REALIZE...
...IS THIS POLICY ISN'T A CONSPIRACY REFLECTING THE PERSONAL DESIRES OF A FEW INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE.

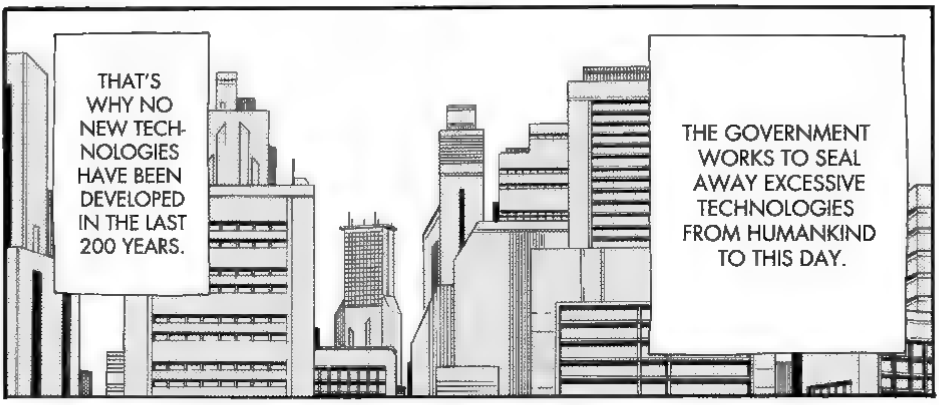
WHAT A STORY..
...CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
SIGH
はー
DUH
ほー
...
SURE.
IS BEER OKAY?
YES, SIR.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
AH! GET ME A DRINK.
YOU'RE STILL DRINKING? YOU JUST DRANK YESTERDAY.
...I'LL DRINK WITH YOU.
...
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING CRAZY.
HOW CAN I NOT DRINK?
DO YOU WANT SOME-THING?

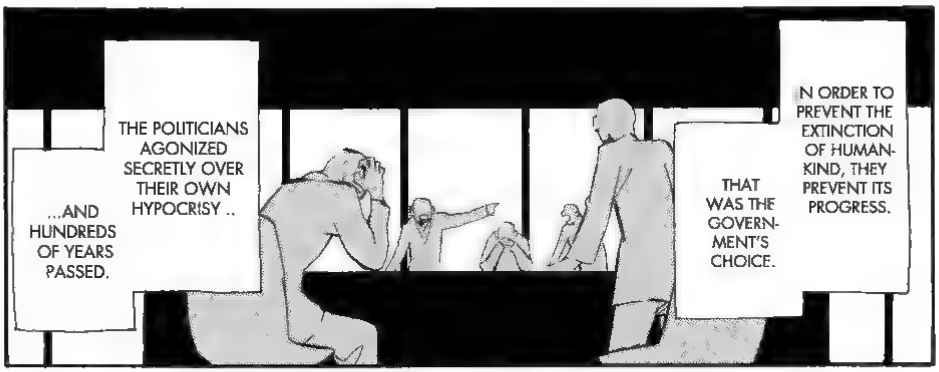

...
...
THAT'S YOUR TENTH ROUND.
ANOTHER ROUND.
. .NEITHER OF US COULD GET DRUNK
THAT DAY, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE DRANK...
.. BUT RATHER THE EXCESSIVE ADVANCEMENT OF REGENERATIVE MEDICINE AND GENETIC ENGINEERING.
...WASN'T EXHAUSTION FROM WAR...
ACCORDING TO TALIO, THE REASON FOR HUMANKIND'S DECLINE...
"SUPER-HUMANS."
THE WORLD WAS FULL OF THEM
IT SUCCESS-FULLY EXTENDED THE HUMAN LIFESPAN.
EVENTUALLY MEDICINE CONQUERED ALL ILLNESS AND EFFORTLESSLY GRANTED POWERFUL MUSCLES.

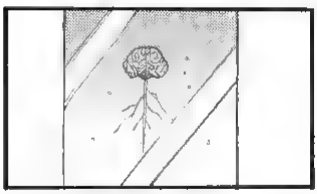

THE BIRTH-RATE FELL BELOW THE NUMBER OF DEATHS.
BIRTH
DEATH
Time
Population
THE "SUPER-HUMANS" DIDN'T WANT CHILDREN.
AT THE SAME TIME, THE BIRTHRATE DROPPED SHARPLY.
DEATH AND BIRTH BECAME LESS COMMON.

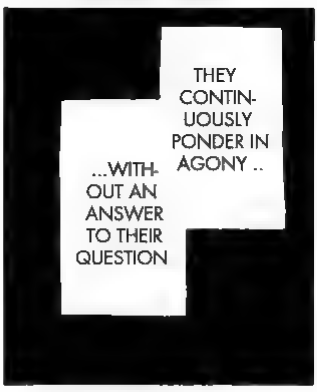

. BUT THE POPULATION CONTINUED TO STEADILY DECLINE.
AND SEALED AWAY THE TECH-NO.OGY OVER TIME.
SO THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT PROHIBITED SPECIAL MEDICINE.

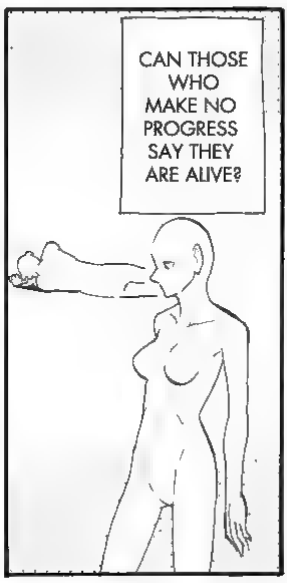

THE ENERGY REVOLUTION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REVOLUTION
DEVELOPMENTS IN NONMEDICAL TECHNOLOGY WERE ALSO BLAMED.
...AND THEIR SPIRIT.
THEY LOST THEIR DESIRE .
...HUMANS EFFORTLESSLY ACQUIRED EVERYTHING THEY WANTED.
...AND A SELFLESS WORK-FORCE. .
WITH LIMITLESS ENERGY...

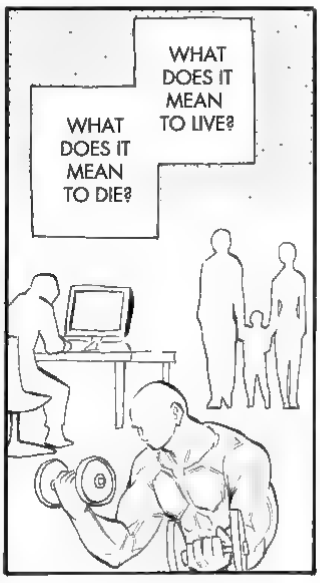

THAT'S WHY NO NEW TECHNOLOGIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE LAST 200 YEARS.
THE GOVERNMENT WORKS TO SEAL AWAY EXCESSIVE TECHNOLOGIES FROM HUMANKIND TO THIS DAY.


...AND HUNDREDS OF YEARS PASSED.
THE POLITICIANS AGONIZED SECRETLY OVER THEIR OWN HYPOCRISY ..
THAT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S CHOICE.
IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE EXTINCTION OF HUMANKIND, THEY PREVENT ITS PROGRESS.




...WITHOUT AN ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION
THEY CONTINUOUSLY PONDER IN AGONY ..

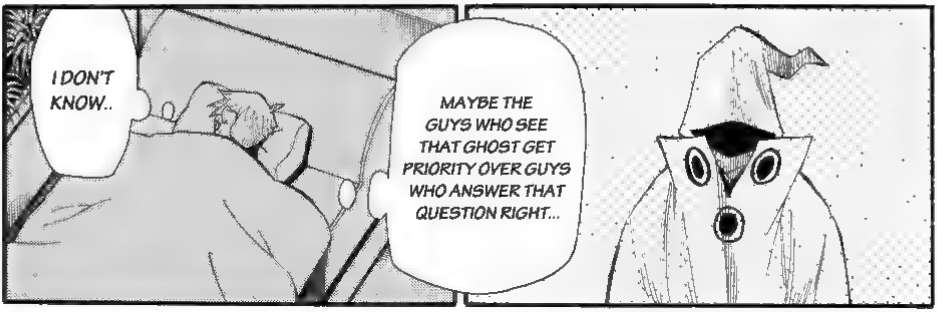

CAN THOSE WHO MAKE NO PROGRESS SAY THEY ARE ALIVE?

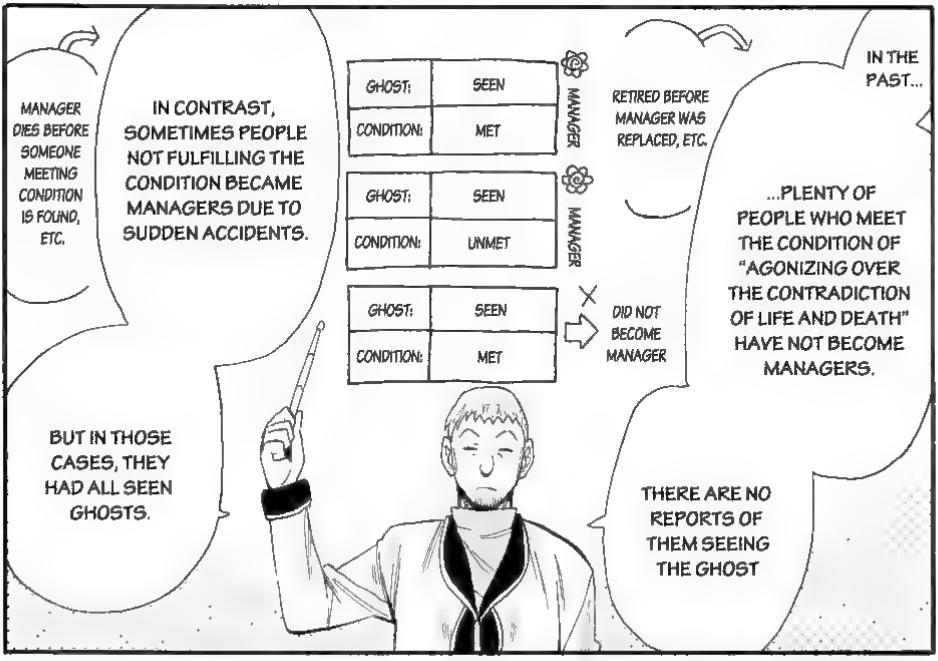

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE?
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DIE?

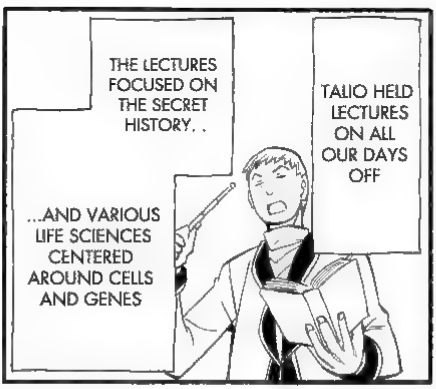
THE FIRST MANAGER OF "THE SLEEPING TOWER" WAS A TROUBLED MEMBER OF THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT.
THOSE WERE THE CONDITIONS FOR BECOMING MANAGER OF "THE SLEEPING TOWER "
TO YOU WHO WILL SOME-DAY BECOME THE TOWER'S MANAGERS, I SAY...
I AM SPACIFICA.
...HUMANKIND'S EXPERIENCE OF DEATH.
DO NOT PER-VERT...

HUMANKIND WANTS TO LIVE ANYWAY.
WE REALIZED THE HYPOCRISY OF THE NON-LIVING LONG AGO.
WHETHER YOU'RE A GOD OR A DEMON, NON-HUMANS SHOULD STAY OUT OF THIS.
OUR SUFFERING IS OUR OWN.

. WE'RE TOLD THAT'S WHAT THE FIRST MANAGER SAID TO THE GHOST
AND
YOU DON'T NEED TO ORDER ME NOT TO TALK.
I COULDN'T TELL ANYONE ANYWAY
.WE DON'T MEET THE CONDITIONS FOR BECOMING MANAGER
.HUH?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT.
WE ANSWERED SO QUICKLY BACK THEN
SORRY FOR MANAGER
WE BELIEVE THEY'RE ALIVE.
YES!
DO YOU THINK THE NON-LIVING ARE ALIVE?


I DON'T KNOW..
MAYBE THE GUYS WHO SEE THAT GHOST GET PRIORITY OVER GUYS WHO ANSWER THAT QUESTION RIGHT...


MANAGER DIES BEFORE SOMEONE MEETING CONDITION IS FOUND, ETC.
IN CONTRAST, SOMETIMES PEOPLE NOT FULFILLING THE CONDITION BECAME MANAGERS DUE TO SUDDEN ACCIDENTS.
GHOST: SEEN
CONDITION: MET
MANAGER
GHOST: SEEN
CONDITION: UNMET
MANAGER
GHOST: SEEN
CONDITION: MET
DID NOT BECOME MANAGER
RETIRED BEFORE MANAGER WAS REPLACED, ETC.
IN THE PAST...
...PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO MEET THE CONDITION OF "AGONIZING OVER THE CONTRADICTION OF LIFE AND DEATH" HAVE NOT BECOME MANAGERS.
BUT IN THOSE CASES, THEY HAD ALL SEEN GHOSTS.
THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF THEM SEEING THE GHOST

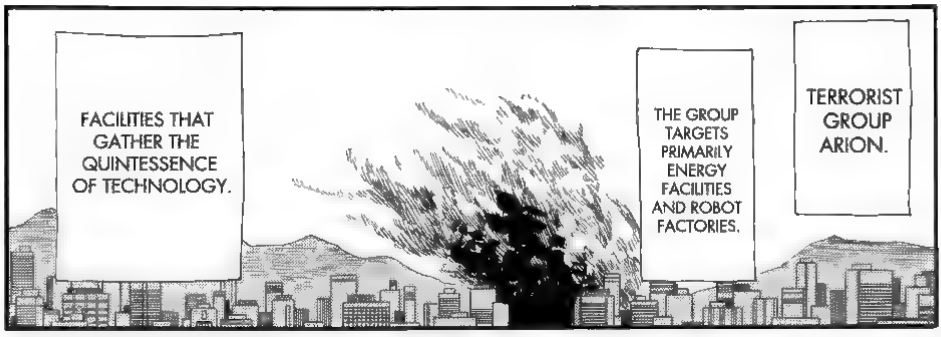

THE LECTURES FOCUSED ON THE SECRET HISTORY. .
TALIO HELD LECTURES ON ALL OUR DAYS OFF
...AND VARIOUS LIFE SCIENCES CENTERED AROUND CELLS AND GENES

BECAUSE THIS SOMETIMES HAPPENS, THOSE WHO SEE GHOSTS RECEIVE THE MANAGERIAL CANDIDATE LECTURE.
HEY, YOU. DON'T LOOK SO IRRITATED.

IT WAS FULL-FLEDGED ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY.
IT CHILLED MY BLOOD.
"THE SLEEPING TOWER" WAS CONDUCTING SPECIAL MEDICAL RESEARCH FORBIDDEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.
THEIR ATTEMPTS ENDED IN FAILURE, THOUGH
THERE WERE EVEN PEOPLE WHO TRIED TO "REVIVE" THE NON-LIVING.
DON'T PUT US IN THE SAME CATEGORY!!
SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING TERRORISTS WOULD DO.
ANYWAY, SHOULD WE BE RESEARCHING FORBIDDEN SUBJECTS...?
YEAH...
WE'VE GOTTEN INVOLVED IN SOMETHING UNBELIEVABLE.

THE TERROR-ISTS ARE AGAINST TECH-NOLOGY!
THEY WANT TO KILL HUMAN INTELLI-GENCE!!
IT'S THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THE MANAGERS HAVE BEEN DOING!!

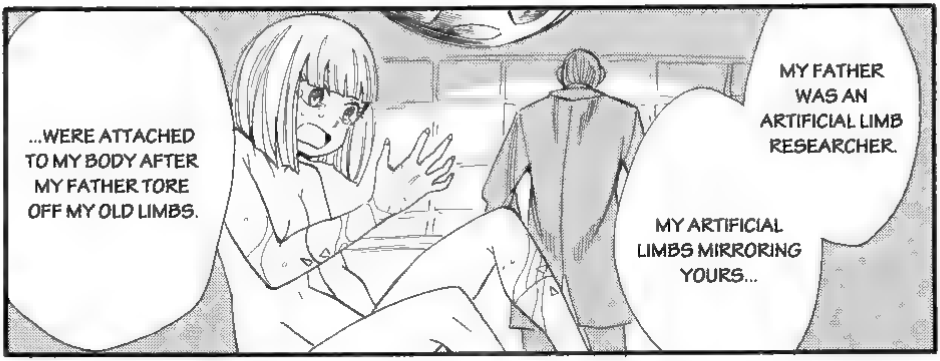
DO YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF GRIEVANCE WITH THEM?
YOU CHANGE THE CHANNEL WHEN NEWS ABOUT TERRORISTS COMES ON.
SORRY..
...
OH-

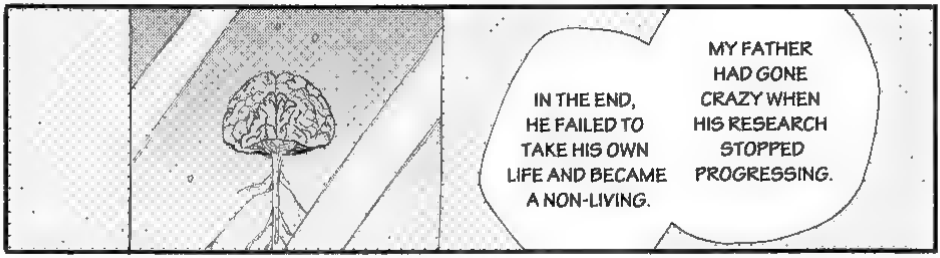

FACILITIES THAT GATHER THE QUINTESSENCE OF TECHNOLOGY.
THE GROUP TARGETS PRIMARILY ENERGY FACILITIES AND ROBOT FACTORIES.
TERRORIST GROUP ARION.

...UNCLE AIZEN AND THE OTHERS.
THEY KILLED...

...I WAS THERE.
A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN THEY TARGETED THE ORBITING ELEVATOR...

I DISLIKE THE ACT OF RESEARCH ITSELF.
..YEAH
IS THAT HOW YOU GOT YOUR ARTIFICIAL ARM AND LEG?
...


...WERE ATTACHED TO MY BODY AFTER MY FATHER TORE OFF MY OLD LIMBS.
MY FATHER WAS AN ARTIFICIAL LIMB RESEARCHER.
MY ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MIRRORING YOURS...


IN THE END, HE FAILED TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE AND BECAME A NON-LIVING.
MY FATHER HAD GONE CRAZY WHEN HIS RESEARCH STOPPED PROGRESSING.

...I DIDN'T KNOW.
YOU TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR PAST ..
I RETURNED THE FAVOR.

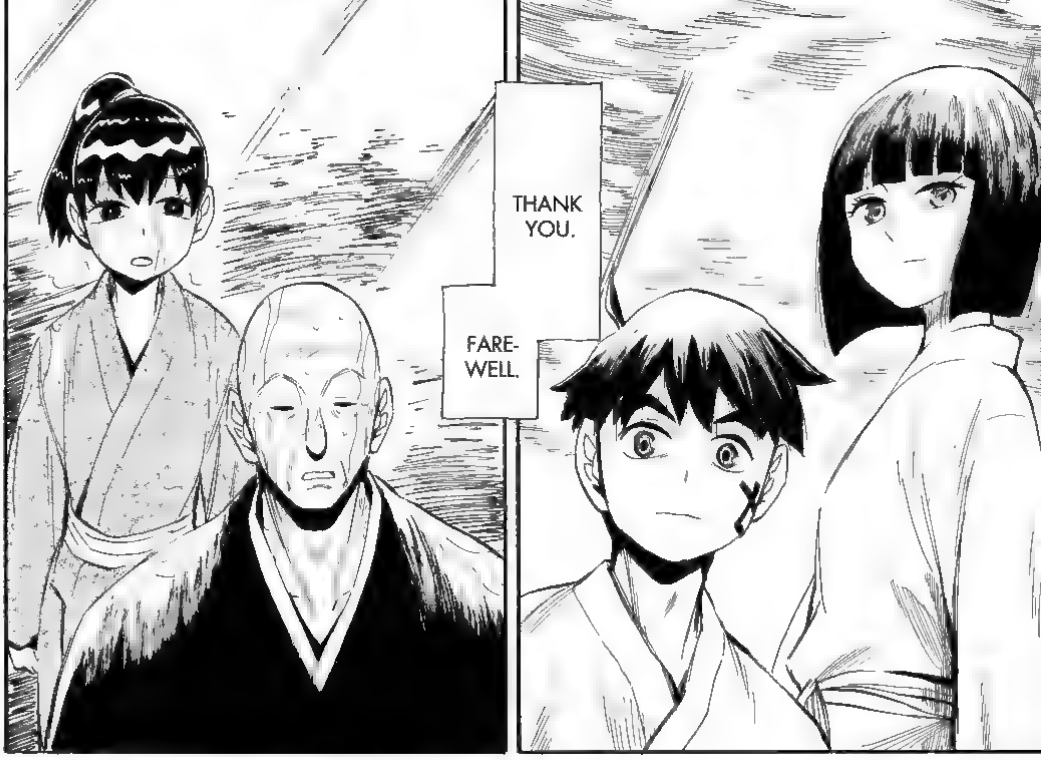
...I DIDN'T END UP DOING IT, THOUGH
I CAME HERE TO BREAK OPEN MY FATHER'S CASE.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE WE MET
IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE'VE TALKED ABOUT OUR PASTS...
.. OR FEEL-INGS.
. I THOUGHT THE SAME THING.
DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE WE'RE FINALLY FRIENDS?
LIKE, "FINALLY!"

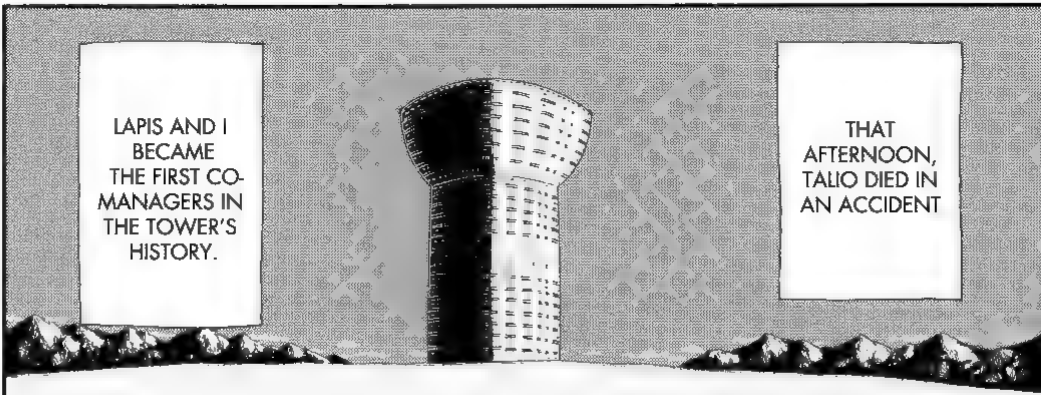
OUR JUNIORS LEFT THE TOWER ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
MORE TIME PASSED.
. .HAD BECOME THE OLDEST EMPLOYEES OF "THE SLEEPING TOWER "
BEFORE WE KNEW IT, THE THREE OF US...
...I HAD THAT DREAM.
THEN ONE DAY ..
AND THE DREAM CON-TINUED
THE RAIN DREAM

IT'S THE LAST DRINK OF MY LIFE.
FINE. HOUTAROU...
ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?
LET'S GO.

...WERE YOU WAITING? I TOLD YOU TO GO ON AHEAD.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE HAVE TO DO.
I THOUGHT WE SHOULD GO TOGETHER, SO I CAME BACK.
PRIEST!

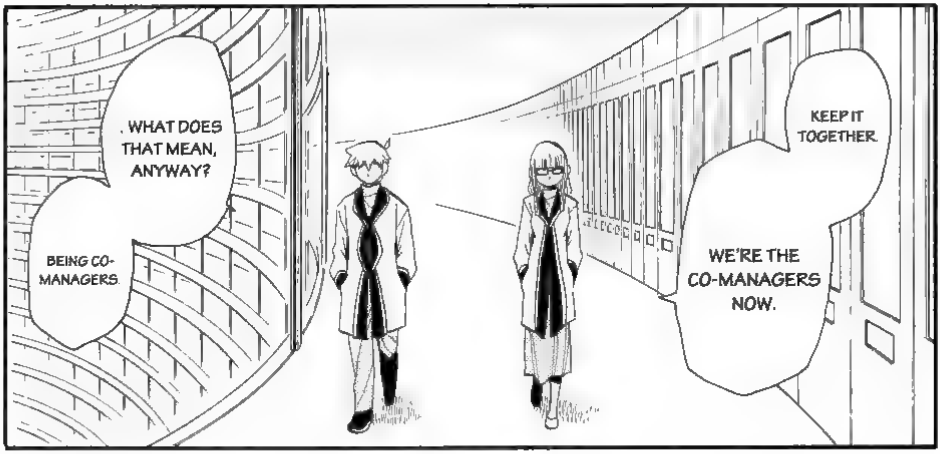

THANK YOU.
FARE-WELL.

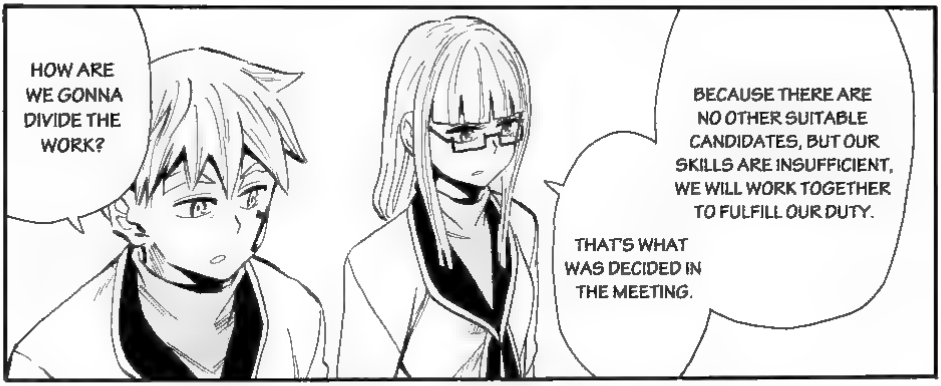
.REPAY THIS DEBT
HRM.
I WILL.


LAPIS AND I BECAME THE FIRST CO-MANAGERS IN THE TOWER'S HISTORY.
THAT AFTERNOON, TALIO DIED IN AN ACCIDENT

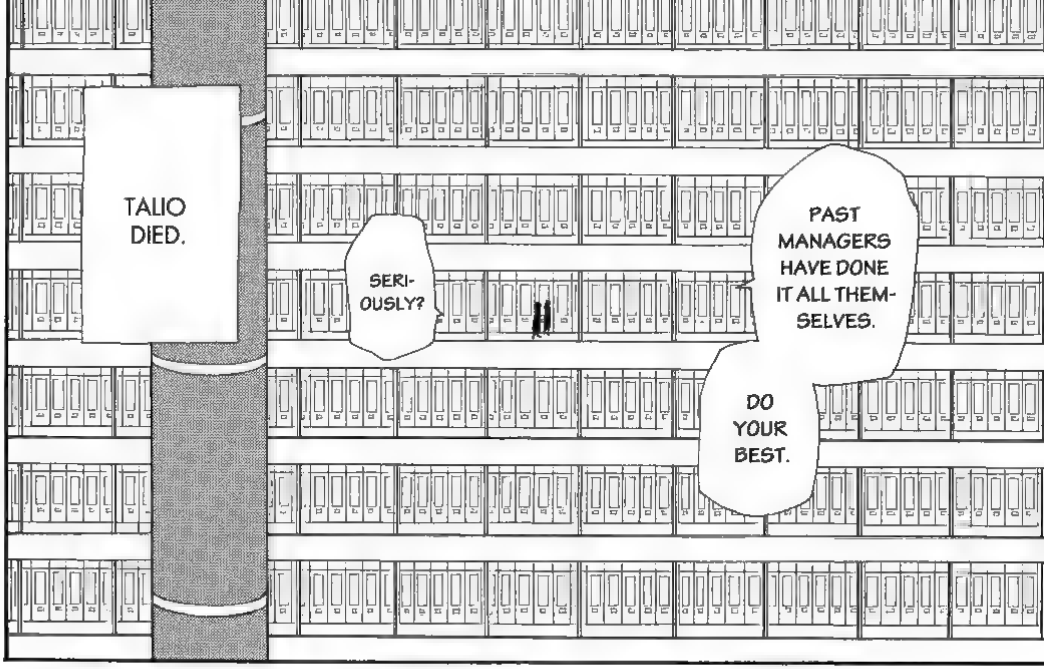
CIRCLE 26
LAFALLE 5

HE WAS IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT WHILE IN THE CITY.
TALIO DIED.
WHEN WE DIE...
...WE END UP HERE, TOO.
NO, NO. TALIO'S NOT DEAD.
HE'S JUST ONE OF THE NON-LIVING NOW.
OH... RIGHT.

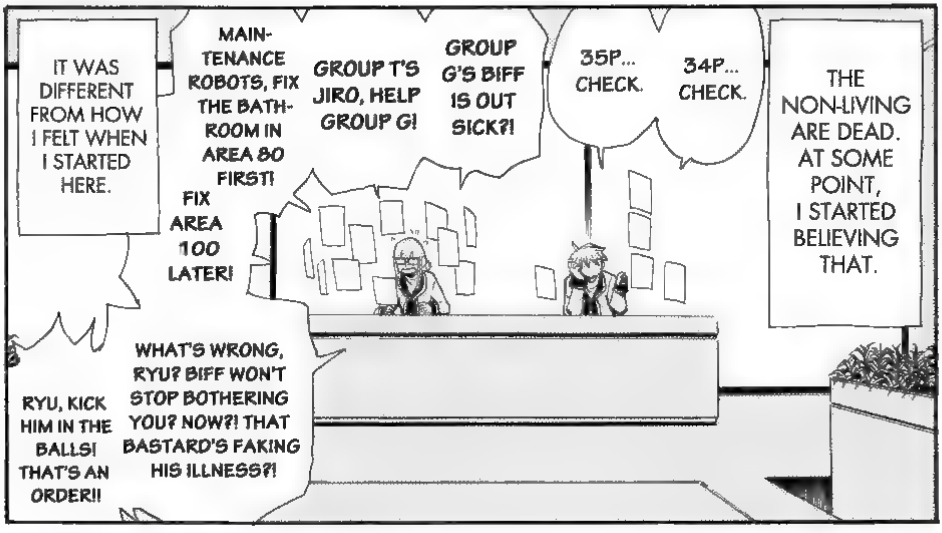

. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, ANYWAY?
BEING CO-MANAGERS.
KEEP IT TOGETHER.
WE'RE THE CO-MANAGERS NOW.


HOW ARE WE GONNA DIVIDE THE WORK?
BECAUSE THERE ARE NO OTHER SUITABLE CANDIDATES, BUT OUR SKILLS ARE INSUFFICIENT, WE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO FULFILL OUR DUTY.
THAT'S WHAT WAS DECIDED IN THE MEETING.

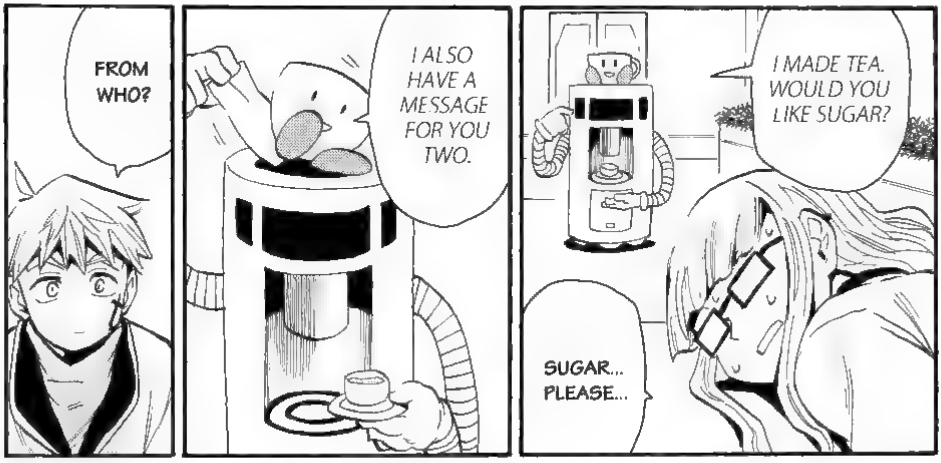
HEY!! THERE ARE JUST OVER THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE AND ROBOTS, BUT THERE ARE A HUNDRED MILLION NON-LIVING!! I CAN'T HANDLE THAT MYSELF!
YOU NOTICED?
. . .
YOU CAN MANAGE THE NON-LIVING.
WELL... I'LL MANAGE THE EMPLOYEES AND ROBOTS.
SURE.
GOT IT.


TALIO DIED.
SERI-OUSLY?
PAST MANAGERS HAVE DONE IT ALL THEM-SELVES.
DO YOUR BEST.

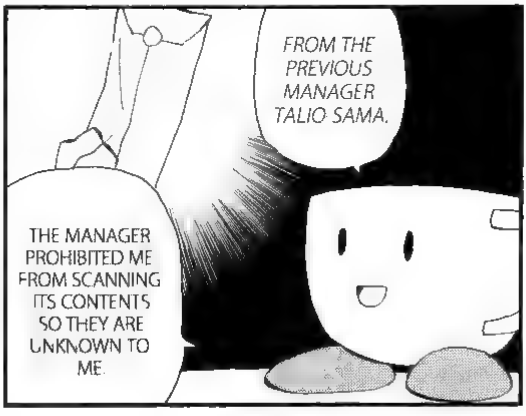
...HE WAS DEAD.
FROM MY PERSPEC-TIVE .


IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM HOW I FELT WHEN I STARTED HERE.
MAIN-TENANCE ROBOTS, FIX THE BATH-ROOM IN AREA 80 FIRST!
FIX AREA 100 LATER!
GROUP T'S JIRO, HELP GROUP G!
GROUP G'S BIFF IS OUT SICK?!
35P... CHECK.
34P... CHECK.
THE NON-LIVING ARE DEAD. AT SOME POINT, I STARTED BELIEVING THAT.
RYU, KICK HIM IN THE BALLS! THAT'S AN ORDER!!
WHAT'S WRONG, RYU? BIFF WON'T STOP BOTHERING YOU? NOW?! THAT BASTARD'S FAKING HIS ILLNESS?!

COME TO THINK OF IT, THE NON-LIVING CAN MOSTLY BE MANAGED AUTOMATICALLY...
THAT SEEMS EASY..
277P... 276P... CHECK.
IT IS EASY.
PEOPLE AND ROBOTS ARE TOUGHER SINCE THEY CHANGE EVERY DAY.
つってもキリないけど
BUT THERE'S NO END TO IT.


FROM WHO?
I ALSO HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU TWO.
I MADE TEA. WOULD YOU LIKE SUGAR?
SUGAR... PLEASE...

?!
FROM TALIO ?!

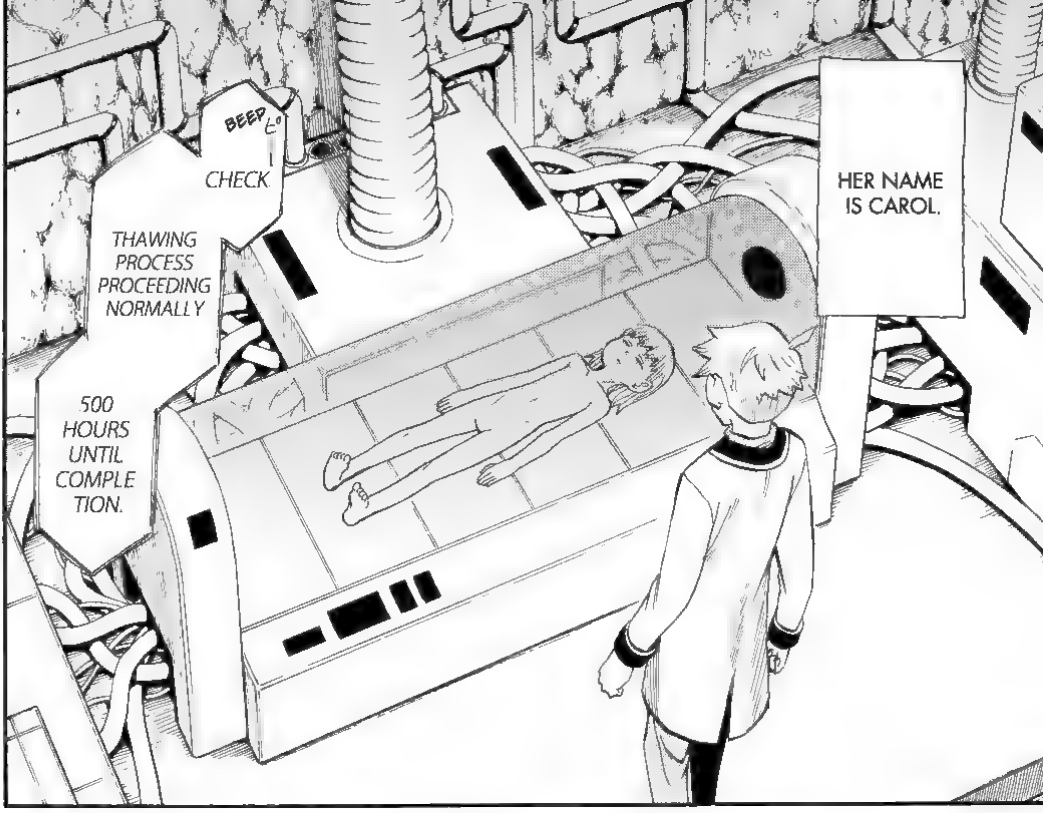

FROM THE PREVIOUS MANAGER TALIO SAMA.
THE MANAGER PROHIBITED ME FROM SCANNING ITS CONTENTS SO THEY ARE UNKNOWN TO ME.

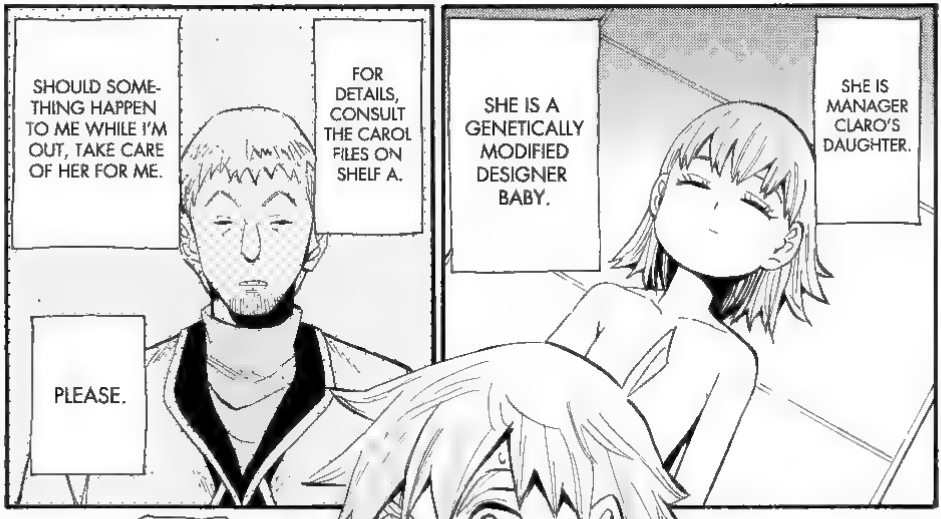
...
...
IT'S A HAND-WRITTEN NOTE...
HEY...
ARE YOU SERI-OUS ..?
I RECEIVED IT THE DAY BEFORE TALIO-SAMA LEFT FOR THE CITY.
WHEN DID HE GIVE THIS TO YOU...?!
URGENT.
I'LL GO CHECK IT OUT FIRST!
LAPIS, YOU COME LATER!
IT'S BEEN A WEEK...
DASH

CODE CLARO!!
ENTER CODE CLARO IN THE HOT WATER PANEL IN ROOM 201.
HEAD TO AREA SPACIFICA AT ONCE.
HAH
HAH
IN THE ROOM THAT APPEARS...
...
RUMBLE
ゴゴゴ...

...THAT IS IN THE PROCESS OF THAWING.
.. YOU WILL FIND A COLD SLEEP DEVICE...

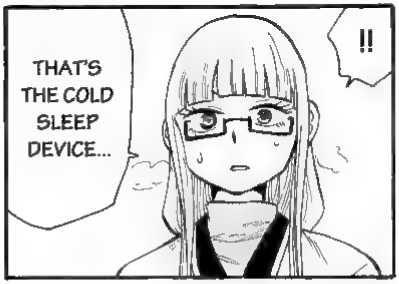
PLEASE CONFIRM THE DEVICE IS OPERATING NORMALLY.
...
ゴクリ
GULP


BEEP
CHECK
THAWING PROCESS PROCEEDING NORMALLY
500 HOURS UNTIL COMPLE TION.
HER NAME IS CAROL.

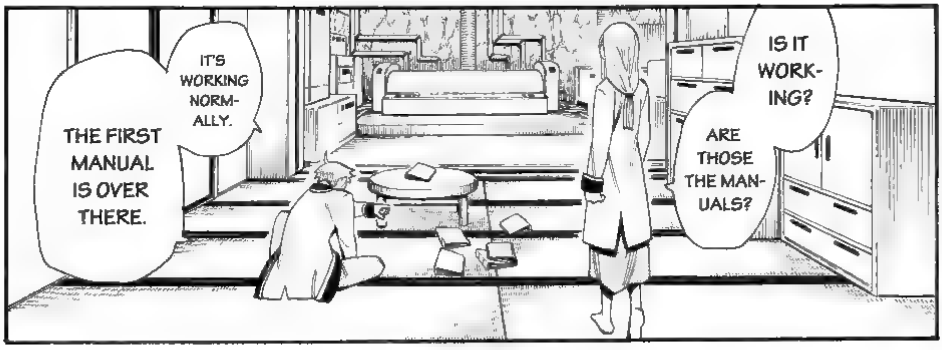

SHOULD SOME-THING HAPPEN TO ME WHILE I'M OUT, TAKE CARE OF HER FOR ME.
FOR DETAILS, CONSULT THE CAROL FILES ON SHELF A.
PLEASE.
SHE IS A GENETICALLY MODIFIED DESIGNER BABY.
SHE IS MANAGER CLARO'S DAUGHTER.

THEY'RE BOTH TECHNOLOGIES PROHIBITED BY THE GOVERNMENT...!!
COLD SLEEP. !!
DESIGNER BABY...!!

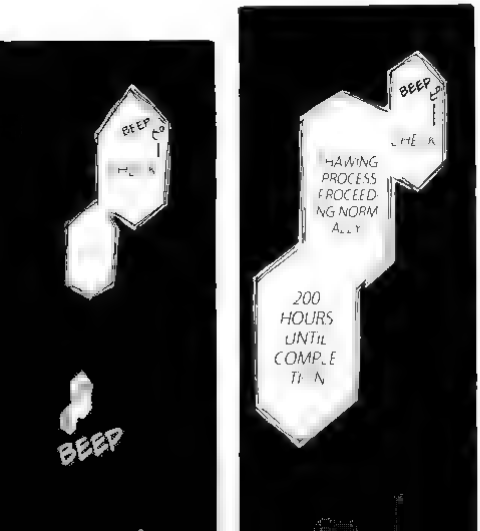
LAPIS..


!!
THAT'S THE COLD SLEEP DEVICE...

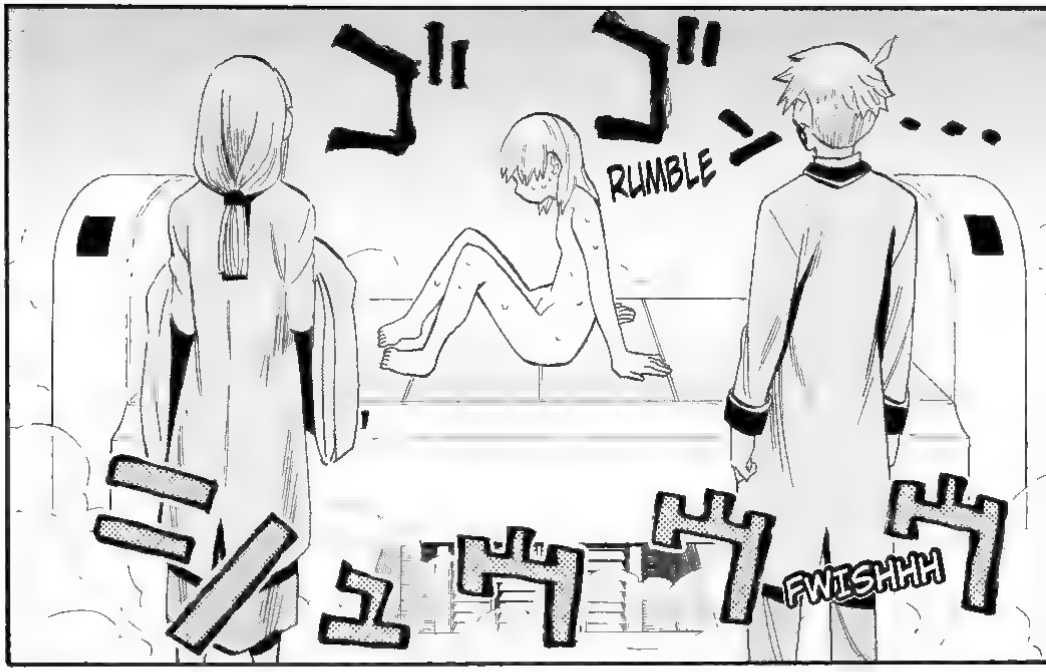
CLICK
カチャ
LA-FALLE!

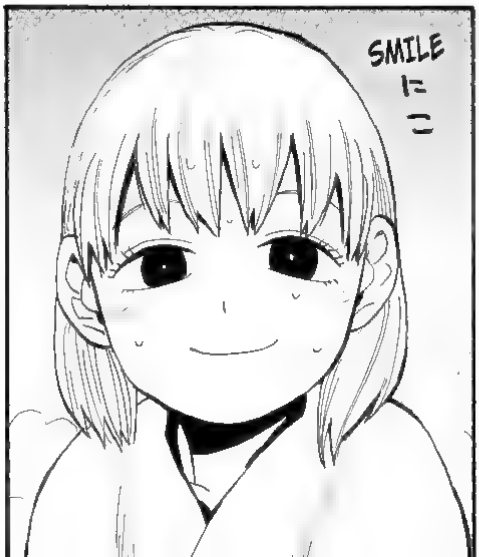

IS IT WORK-ING?
ARE THOSE THE MAN-UALS?
IT'S WORKING NORM-ALLY.
THE FIRST MANUAL IS OVER THERE.

...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE HAVE TO DO IT.


BEEP
BEEP
HAVING PROCESS PROCEED-NG NORM-ALLY
200 HOURS UNTIL COMPLE-TION

OPENING HATCH
3
2
1
BODY TEMPERATURE NORMAL PULSE NORMAL BRAINWAVES NORMAL
20 SECONDS REMAINING


RUMBLE
FWISHHH


SMILE

CAN—
RUSTLE
CAN YOU STAND?
GOOD MORNING, CAROL.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
...

AHH!
STAGGER
OH. .
...RIFFLE AND UNCLE AIZEN SAID THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE BORN TO REPAY A DEBT TO ME.
I KNEW IT WAS JUST MY FANTASY, BUT...
"MY LIFE EXISTS..."
"...FOR THIS CHILD."
...FELT THE SAME WAY.
IN THIS MOM-ENT. .
...I THINK I... AND PROBABLY LAPIS, TOO...

HE ASKED US TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
WHERE'S DAD...?
CLA... YOUR FATHER IS DOING SOMETHING FAR AWAY.
I SEE..
I'M CAROL.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I'M LAFALLE.
NICE TO MEET YOU
I'M LAPIS.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
でれ～～
LOVESTRUCK
TALIO TOOK OVER RESEARCHING THE MEDICINE AFTER MANAGER CLARO, AND TALIO COMPLETED THE CURE.
CAROL WAS PUT INTO COLD SLEEP TO WAIT FOR THE CURE FOR A CERTAIN DISEASE TO BE COMPLETED.

...OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR US?
DID TALIO KEEP IT SECRET UNTIL NOW...
.. TALIO GOT INTO AN ACCIDENT
DURING THE THREE-MONTH THAWING PROCESS.
THIS GIRL?
RAISE HER HIMSELF?
WHAT DID HE INTEND TO DO, ANYWAY?
IT'S TOO LATE NOW!!
DID HE NOT WANT US TO GET INVOLVED?
WAS HE GOING TO RAISE HER ALONE, HIDDEN FROM SOCIETY?
HOW?!
THIS MASS OF FEDERALLY PROHIBITED TECHNOLOGY.
THIS DESIGNER BABY.

...
LAFALLE, A WORD.
NOT ONLY DID HE GENETICALLY MODIFY HIS DAUGHTER, BUT HE MEANT TO CONCEA. HER FROM THE WORLD
AND MANAGER CLARO IS AN INSANE MAD SCIENTIST!
NO, YOU HAVE TO KEEP TAKING IT EVERY DAY FOR ANOTHER WEEK.
SORRY.
IS THIS ALL THE MEDICINE?
WHAT? NO FAIR.
WHAT'S NOT FAIR?
IT'LL SEEM SUSPICIOUS IF BOTH THE MANAGERS ARE MISSING
YOU GO BACK UP.
I'M GOING TO STAY HERE A WHILE TO LOOK AFTER HER.
MARRIED--!
WHAT?
YEAH .
IT'D BE QUICKER FOR US TO GET MARRIED...
AND.
A FAMILY REGISTER?
ALSO, WHEN YOU'RE UPSTAIRS, LOOK UP HOW TO ACQUIRE A FAMILY REGISTER.

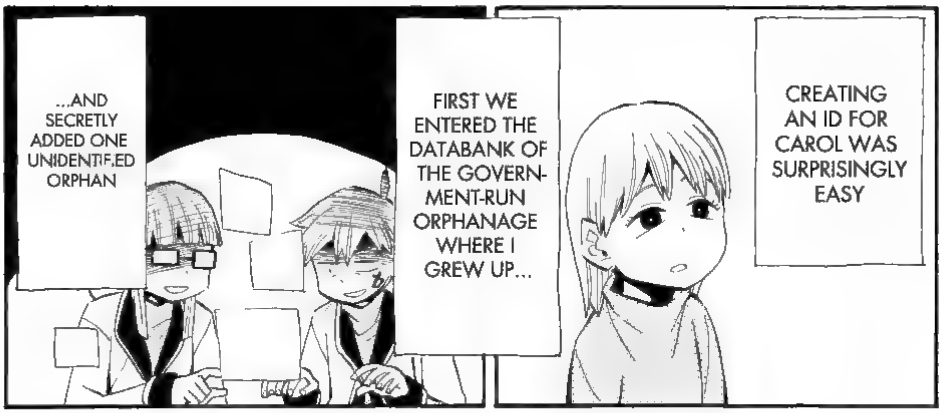
WE'RE GETTING MARRIED.
GRAB
LAFALLE.
WHAT?!
...
WE'RE GOING TO GET MARRIED AND ADOPT CAROL.
I WANT TO GIVE THAT GIRL A PROPER PLACE TO LIVE.
HELP ME.

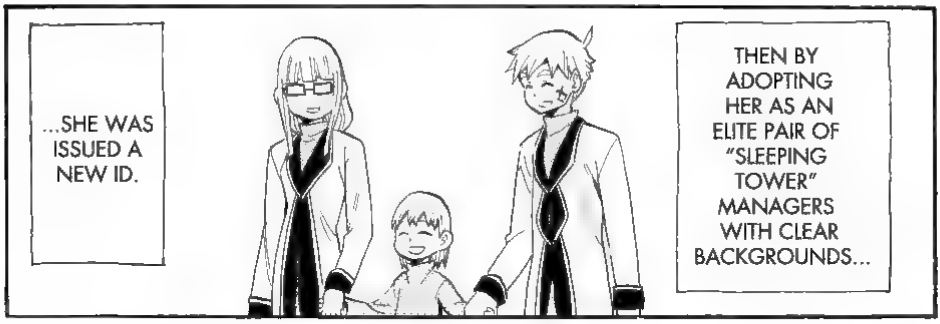
...I DON'T WANT TO HIDE HER FROM THE WORLD AND MAKE HER LIVE IN THIS BASEMENT HER WHOLE LIFE.
JUST BECAUSE SHE'S A DESIGNER BABY PROHIBITED BY THE GOVERNMENT...

HELP ME.
PLEASE...!!
I DON'T WANT TO SACRIFICE HER LIFE TO HER FATHER'S HUMAN EXPERIMENTS.

CAROL IS OUR DAUGHTER.
FINE. LET'S GET MARRIED.
...A FAMILY.
STARTING TODAY, WE ARE...

WHAT?!
WE'RE MARRIED.
EMP_OYEES
WE'RE MARRIED NOW.
WELL... A LOT HAPPENED.
どよどよ
CHATTER
SHE GREW ON YOU QUICK!!
A BUNCH OF STUFF HAPPENED, AND WE ADOPTED A DAUGHTER.
YOUR DAUGHTER IS HUGE!
MOM.
THIS IS OUR DAUGHTER CAROL.
I WONDER WHO PROPOSED?
BUT THEY'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER A LONG TIME...
I DIDN'T THINK THOSE TWO HAD THAT SORT OF RELATIONSHIP...
HOW OLD IS YOUR DAUGHTER?
NO ONE GETS MARRIED ANYMORE
ざわざわ
CHATTER
YOU'RE RIGHT
EVERYONE'S MORE SURPRISED THAN I EXPECTED


CREATING AN ID FOR CAROL WAS SURPRISINGLY EASY
FIRST WE ENTERED THE DATABANK OF THE GOVERNMENT-RUN ORPHANAGE WHERE I GREW UP...
...AND SECRETLY ADDED ONE UNIDENTIFIED ORPHAN

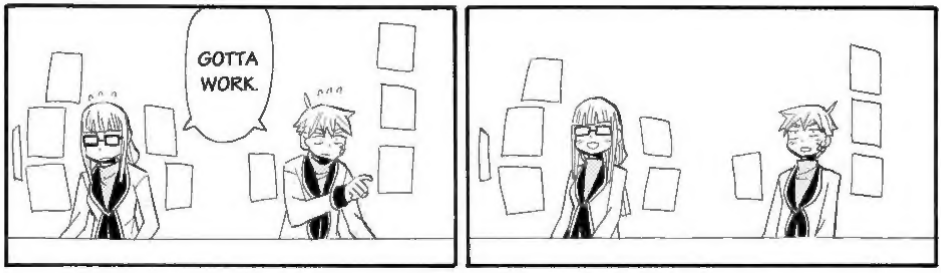

THEN BY ADOPTING HER AS AN ELITE PAIR OF "SLEEPING TOWER" MANAGERS WITH CLEAR BACKGROUNDS...
...SHE WAS ISSUED A NEW ID.

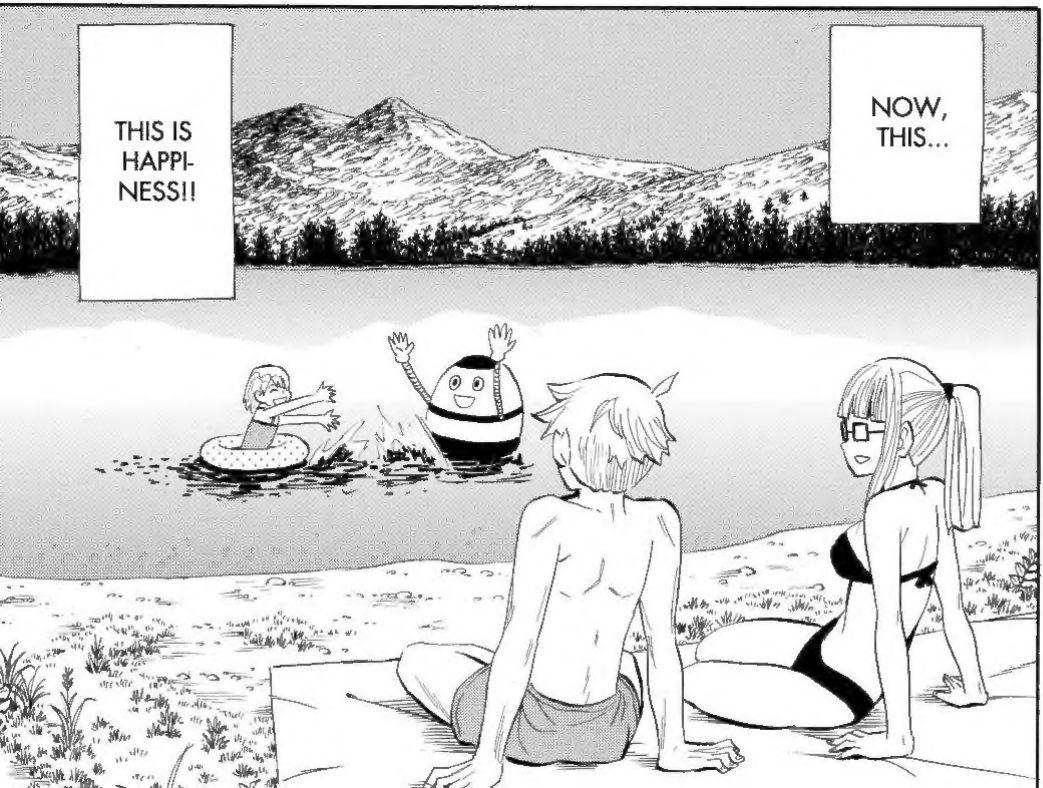
IT WAS A PIECE OF CAKE
AND IT SURE IS HANDY HAVING AUTHORITY

THEN WE BEGAN CREATING A FAMILY.
THE THREE OF US STARTED LIVING TOGETHER.

ARE YOU COMING BACK? WILL YOU COME BACK?
BE NICE TO TAPPER.
TAPPER
WE'RE GOING TO WORK NOW.
PROMISE.
YOU'D BETTER COME BACK.
WE'LL BE BACK FOR LUNCH. LET'S EAT TOGETHER, OKAY?
OF COURSE.
ME, TOO.
I WANT TO QUIT WORKING.
AND STAY AT HOME ALL THE TIME.
...BUT SHE WAS UNUSUALLY LONELY, SO WE WENT THROUGH THIS EVERY MORNING.
CAROL GREW ON US QUICKLY...

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NEXT WEEKEND?
I'M AFRAID OF THE CITY. WHAT ABOUT THE LAKE TO THE WEST?
THAT SOUNDS GREAT! WE'D BETTER GET SWIMSUITS.
SHOULD WE GO OUT?


GOTTA WORK.


THIS IS HAPPI-NESS!!
NOW, THIS...

I HAVE NOTHING BUT GRATITUDE FOR MANAGER CLARO AND TALIO.
NO... MY HANDS NATURALLY CAME TOGETHER.
THEY BROUGHT US TO CAROL.
YOU'RE, WHAT... A BUDDHIST?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
...
HE EXPERI-MENTED ON HIS DAUGHTER.
HE'S JUST LIKE MY OWN FATHER.
...I'M NOT GRATEFUL TO MANAGER CLARO.
I THINK MANAGER CLARO WANTED TO GIVE CAROL POWER.
I FEEL LIKE I UNDER-STAND NOW.
TALIO CREATED A MEDICINE TO SUPPRESS THAT.
HOWEVER, SHE FELL ILL. HER CELLS WERE DIVIDING TOO MUCH... HER HEALING POWERS WERE OUT OF CONTROL.
INTELLIGENCE... STRENGTH... RESILIENCE... HE WANTED TO MAKE HER...
...ONE THE "SUPER-HUMANS" OF OLD.

MANAGER CLARO GAVE HER TOO MUCH POWER.
WHAT HE PROBABLY WANTED...
...WAS TO GIVE HUMAN-KIND THE STRENGTH TO WALK AGAIN.
I'VE BEEN DOING SOME RESEARCH LATELY.
ABOUT WHAT?
THE TERRORIST GROUP ARION AND ITS RELATION-SHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT.
THE RELATION-SHIP OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SLEEPING TOWER.
RELA-TION-SHIP...?
NEXT WEEK YOU'RE GOING INTO THE CITY FOR WORK, RIGHT?
...BE CAREFUL.
...BE CAREFUL? WHAT ARE YOU--
MOM, I HAVE TO PEE.

...TALIO'S ACCIDENT...
MAY-BE...
WHAT A COINCI-DENCE. I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE I LEFT THE FACILITY.
HEY, LA-FALLE. LONG TIME, NO SEE.
I HEARD YOU BECAME THE MANAGER OF THAT "TOMB."
...WASN'T AN ORDINARY ACCIDENT.